

Alexandra Kenner  
Philadelphia, Pa, 19143  
Ph. 267-627-1052  
September, 1 2022

Jacqueline C. Romero, Esq.  
United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania

Amanda Reinitz, Esq.  
Assistant United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania

The United States Attorney's Office  
Eastern District of Pennsylvania  
615 Chestnut St # 1250,  
Philadelphia, PA 19106  
ATTN: Anthony Smith

Dear Ms. Romero and Ms. Reinitz,

My name is Alex Kenner, and I am an educator in the state of Pennsylvania. I am writing on behalf of my friend Anthony Smith. I met Anythony in 2012 during our undergraduate experience at Arcadia University. For the 10 years I have known him, he has been an ally to disenfranchised groups and an irreplaceable community builder in Philadelphia. Anthony has used his voice and social media platforms to promote mutual aid for Philadelphians experiencing food insecurities, eviction, and homelessness. I have never known anyone as dedicated to social justice and their city as Anthony Smith.

Around Philadelphia, Anthony is known for his love of music, running, and the field of education. But one of his greatest talents is his ability to intertwine his passions with community engagement. Whether it is using music as a tool to teach history or uplifting spirits by running every week with friends, Anthony is always present and intentional about his interactions. His absence would be a detriment to Philadelphia and greatly felt by his students, spaces like community town halls, and volunteer initiatives such as those with Foods not Bombs. I would be happy to expound upon any of the sentiments shared in this letter - Anthony is a phenomenal friend and it would be devastating to see him imprisoned.

Thank you for your time and consideration for reading my letter. I hope you will consider my request.

Kind regards,  
Alex Kenner



Aathira Chennat  
(734) 272-6985  
Philadelphia, PA 19106

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August 29th, 2022

Jacqueline C. Romero, Esq.  
United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania

Amanda Reinitz, Esq.  
Assistant United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania

The United States Attorney's Office  
Eastern District of Pennsylvania  
615 Chestnut St # 1250,  
Philadelphia, PA 19106

ATTN: Anthony Smith

Dear Ms. Romero and Ms. Reinitz.

My name is Aathira Chennat, and I am the Development and Programs coordinator at Twelve Gates Arts in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. I am writing on behalf of my friend Anthony Smith. I have known Anthony for three years as a fellow community member and one year as a co-worker since I began volunteering with a food distribution organization that Anthony is also a part of. We work together every Friday to pack 50 grocery bags filled with produce, dry goods, toiletries, and a mask, which we hand out to folks at 60th Street Station. During the school year, Anthony commutes from school in North Philly to West Philly to pack bags and serve with us. His teacher voice serves us well, his is the loudest, clearest on the block; he engages everyone who passes by the station. "Free food! No questions asked. Fresh greens, bread and a mask in every bag! If you don't need one, take a bag for your neighbor!" Across all the people who stop by our table to pick up a bag, regulars and newcomers alike, no one leaves without an elbow bump from and a "You good? Take care" from Anthony. He makes folks feel welcomed and safe, his warmth eases the tension and shame that one can feel around receiving free food.

I am writing today to urge you to keep Anthony here, with his community. His work in our organization is just one facet of all he does within West Philadelphia. When he's not volunteering with us or educating youth in school, he's helping friends, family, and neighbors out. Anthony is a



Aathira Chennat  
(734) 272-6985  
Philadelphia, PA 19106

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natural leader and facilitator. He brings folks together with his genuine positivity and enthusiasm, he encourages everyone he meets to pay that positivity forward. Through his actions, I am reminded how simple and powerful it can be to be in community. With a nod of the head, a “You good?” or “Be safe,” we can remind one another that we care for them, that we’re looking out for them. In this way, he’s taught me, and so many others, how to practice simple acts of community care in everyday life. As we face growing uncertainty in our economy and rapid change and unsafety within neighborhoods, we need to let our neighbors know we can support each other every chance we get. Within this context, it is my ardent belief that Anthony’s presence & leadership are a vital community resource. He cannot be this integral part of our community from prison. We need him here.

Thank you Judge Romero for your time and consideration for reading my letter. I hope you will consider my request.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Aathira Chennat'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name 'Aathira' and last name 'Chennat' clearly visible.

Aathira Chennat

Name: Alexa Rodriguez

Address: (Philadelphia, Pa 19121)

Telephone Number: (484)651-5563

Date: 9/1/22

The Honorable (Name of Judge)

Judge of (Name of Court)

(Mailing address of court)

Anthony Smith, Case Number \*\*\*\*\*

Dear Judge (Last Name of Judge),

My name is Alexa Rodriguez, and I am a licensed clinical social worker in the state of Pennsylvania. I am writing on behalf of my friend Anthony Smith. I have known Anthony since attending Arcadia University in the fall of 2010. Anthony is and has been an upstanding citizen. Within the last two years, he has continued to advocate for community garden spaces, volunteered his time to serve those in need of basic essentials, and educate youth within the Philadelphia school system. Anthony is a community member that has continued to place the needs of others before himself consistently providing resources to others so that they may thrive in exercising their human rights. Anthony since the day I met him has been caring, honest, and a light for those around him. Anthony is funny and always has been a peaceful man.

I am writing this letter because a society without a man like Anthony causes pause. The first way this would cause a deficit is to the community he serves. Anthony serves those in need providing basic essentials because there is a need, despite services in the city...there are still those in need of empathy, kindness, and education. There are those that depend on the grassroots work that Anthony and others do so that they can live another day in hopes of creating a meaningful life and without him, the chain of support is broken...the light of the community will dim. Anthony's lack of presence changes the school system. Academic professionals are few and far between in terms of those that receive an education and return

to the community willing to replenish it with knowledge and power for change. It is my hope that this letter will help to highlight the foundational presence Anthony has on continuing good work for youth and beyond.

Thank you Judge for your time and consideration for reading my letter. I hope you will consider my request.

Respectfully,

Alexa Rodriguez



YouthBuild Philadelphia Charter School  
1231 N. Broad St., 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
Philadelphia PA 19122  
(P) 215-627-8671  
(F) 215-763-5774

CHARTER SCHOOL

To whom it may concern:

I'm writing this letter as an update from the nearly two years since my colleague and friend, Anthony Smith, was first arrested. My original letter is enclosed for reference. To begin, I can't fathom having gone through these past two school years without Ant. I am grateful he was able to spend this time with us and his friends and family beyond YouthBuild. Navigating students and schools through the compounding hardships of covid, economic struggles, and gun violence in Philly has been incredibly challenging. It is a labor of love to continue showing up and bringing our best selves each day to offer even a fraction of what our young people deserve. Nobody embodies that love for our students quite like Ant.

Over the past two years Ant has supported YouthBuild students to become advocates for themselves and others through his advocacy class. As an educator I deeply admire his ability to guide students to find their own voice, recognize the issues that they feel strongly about, and support their ability to express their ideas and opinions. It was because of his class that I learned what an incredible artist one of my mentees from last school year is. She talked about how much she enjoyed his class and the opportunity it gave her to express herself. There are only 6 instructors at YouthBuild and we currently still haven't filled a vacancy for our sixth. We are not a giant school where coverages for absent staff are a daily occurrence; every teacher is needed and matters every day. The impact of not having Ant in his classroom would be immeasurable.

There is no doubt in my mind that the only place Ant belongs is among the community. Here at YouthBuild he is unwavering in his positivity and commitment to solutions and improvement. But equally significant is that Ant is that same committed, loving, community-oriented person in every space. I stand behind him 100%

Sincerely,

Erika Starr Celley  
Math Teacher  
267-606-3415



CHARTER SCHOOL

YouthBuild Philadelphia Charter School  
1231 N. Broad St., 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
Philadelphia PA 19122  
(P) 215-627-8671  
(F) 215-763-5774

To whom it may concern:

I'm writing this letter on behalf of Anthony Smith, a friend, coworker, and incredible human being. I remember when Ant started with us, he started mid year which is already a daunting task, but he jumped in with both feet, not only because he immediately cared for our students, but because service to the community (one of his largest roles as a Community Projects Coordinator) is an integral part of his life long before he came to YB. When his time as an Americorps member was coming to a close I was talking with a colleague about "what position do you think YB could create to keep Ant?" When the social studies position became available that same year I knew he was the perfect person for the job.

I've been teaching in Philadelphia for 13 years and could count on one hand the number of black male educators I've known. The impact he has as a role model for the young men in his life, from our students, to his younger brothers, to the younger Americorps members he's supported is immeasurable. His belief in the community to support each other and fight injustice is unwavering. He has had a profound impact on me as an educator and I know with all my heart that every person who has met him is better for it.

Knowing Ant hasn't made me a better person solely because his passion inspires me, his lessons teach me, and his commitment humbles me. Ant makes people better because he also brings so much joy. His laugh and smile are contagious and hearing him cheer on students at graduation is one of my favorite experiences. He's got a nickname for everyone and claps and yells and supports every single student with boundless love and pride. I often pick on Ant for waiting until 4pm to have something to eat- but it's because he'd rather spend lunch with our young people or talking in the hallways. He is really one of the best humans I know and I send him every ounce of support I can.

Sincerely,

Erika Starr Celley  
Math Teacher  
267-606-3415

*Rebuilding Lives and Communities*  
[www.youthbuildphilly.org](http://www.youthbuildphilly.org)

Robert Saleem Holbrook

1316 S. 51st Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19143  
October 6th, 2022

Re: Anthony Smith

Dear Honorable Judge,

I am writing this letter on behalf of Ant Smith. I have known Ant since 2018 when I first met him at a civics training for people returning home from incarceration. He brought several students from his class to participate in the training and help co-facilitate it at the Philadelphia Student Union office.

Throughout the years Ant has been a reliable go to person for the community to reach out to for help with at-risk youth. I was shocked when Ant was charged with federal offenses in 2020 because it was so outside the character and person I know him to be and have seen in the community.

I cannot speak to the charges Ant is facing nor is it my responsibility to determine his guilt or innocence. As a member of the community however I can say that the community would not be served if Ant is sentenced to spend time in prison. Since his release from custody pending trial for the charges, he has been engaged in the same work he's always been doing: teaching youth from marginalized communities with a passion, working with community advocates to help feed the homeless and poor, and being a mentor to so many people who are struggling to raise children in some of Philadelphia's most poor and violent neighborhoods. Removing Ant from this environment would cut many people off from the support Ant provides.

In closing, I would ask the prosecutor and the court to please impose a sentence that does not include incarceration.

Sincerely,

Robert Saleem Holbrook





Jackson Kusiak  
619 S. 3rd St.  
Philadelphia, PA 19147  
October 10, 2020

Jacqueline C. Romero, Esq.  
United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania

Amanda Reinitz, Esq.  
Assistant United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania

The United States Attorney's Office  
Eastern District of Pennsylvania  
615 Chestnut St # 1250,  
Philadelphia, PA 19106

ATTN: Anthony Smith

Dear Ms. Romero and Ms. Reinitz.

My name is Jackson Kusiak and I am a proud friend and supporter of Anthony Smith. I have known Anthony for 6 years and since the day I met him I could always tell what a kind, genuine, and caring soul he is. When I met Anthony, I was a teacher at a Pre-K and Afterschool program in North Philadelphia called Sweetland Childcare Center. We both instantly connected over our efforts to build connections with our students and provide them with the resources and education that they need to succeed in life. At the time, Anthony had recently started his job as full-time Social Studies teacher at YouthBuild Charter School in North Philadelphia. YouthBuild exists to support students that have either dropped out of high school or are interested in alternative learning styles, including learning vocational skills. At YouthBuild, Anthony engages his students by immersing them in history and encouraging lively discussion in his class. In addition, Anthony works with the school to develop restorative justice practices to resolve student conflict without the use of harsh discipline. Anthony has taught me a great deal about restorative justice, accountability, and educational practice and I have employed those skills in my own educational career and experiences. Anthony's students love him and value having a teacher who strives to understand them, support them, and helps them learn during a global pandemic which has challenged all of our teachers and students so much already.

After working as a teacher at Sweetland Childcare, I started working in the solar industry and became a solar installer and later a solar salesperson at Solar States. Solar States is a small company based in North Philadelphia that does solar installation in the Philadelphia region and also trains and educates young people and adults interested in entering the green economy and the solar and electrical trades. Solar States has training programs at YouthBuild Charter School and at the Opportunities Industrialization Center (OIC), which is a vocational school located next door to YouthBuild Charter School. Several Solar States employees were hired from YouthBuild after going through our solar training program and have been dedicated and skilled employees for years. My one co-worker, Shaleia Quarles, remembers being in Mr. Ant's (Anthony Smith's) class in high school and loved having him as a teacher. He made a strong impression on her and YouthBuild helped give her the opportunity to be in the job that she is in now. She has been working in the Permitting and Electrical Interconnection Department of Solar

States for 3 years and has been a phenomenal employee. In the two years that Anthony has been awaiting trial he has continued to educate, inspire and support his students at YouthBuild. What will happen to the YouthBuild students who don't have their social studies teacher if Anthony Smith is incarcerated or given a felony conviction that does not allow him to work in schools?

I humbly ask that you consider the fact that Anthony has continued to be an incredible asset to the community since he was released pre-trial. He has maintained year-round employment, he has continued to do community service, and he has kept up with all of the stipulations of his pretrial release. Any further incarceration of Anthony Smith could adversely affect his student's ability to get an adequate education. Anthony Smith is an asset to his community and a mentor to many young people. He is a valued and loved community member with a steady job and an unparalleled commitment to community service. Please consider this to be a statement of my profound belief that Anthony is needed at home with his family and community at this time and poses absolutely no risk whatsoever to the public.

Sincerely,  
Jackson Kusiak,  
Solar Energy Consultant at Solar States



**RUTGERS**

Graduate School of Education

**Education, Theory, Policy and Administration**

Graduate School of Education

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[krystal.strong@rutgers.edu](mailto:krystal.strong@rutgers.edu)

*Advancing Excellence and Equity in Education*

9 October 2022

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter in support of Anthony Smith and to express my unwavering belief in his innocence. I am an assistant professor of Black Studies in Education at Rutgers University in the Graduate School of Education and am also involved in community advocacy work. Over the past few years, I have come to know Anthony Smith well, as both a respected educator and community advocate.

In the Philadelphia educator community, Anthony is a highly sought-after resource for youth advocacy and community-engaged education. His work at Youth Build is well known within the educator community, as is the significant impact he has had on Black and Brown youth, who face multiple forms of marginalization. I have heard Anthony speak on numerous occasions to audiences of youth, parents, teachers, and community members on how to empower young people, including at the Philadelphia Student Union and Uncle Bobbie's Coffee and Books. I have personally learned so much from Anthony's work as a teacher and know him to be deeply committed to education as a tool for change.

In his community advocacy work, Anthony is a pillar within the community. I have worked closely with Anthony in recent years and know him to be a tireless advocate for community members, and someone who is deeply respected by all who meet him for his commitment to being a positive force within the community. I first became aware of Anthony Smith's community work through Food Not Bombs, where he distributes food and other goods to community members on a weekly basis. I was quite impressed, as many people are, by his dedication to this work, which is done without thanks or the spotlight. Since then, I have seen Anthony speak on many occasions on panels and at community gatherings about the needs of community members and ways to better support marginalized communities. I have seen him engage with children and young adults, who look up to him for his ability to empathize with them and connect earnestly to their experiences. He is truly one of the most skilled and respected young community advocates in the city of Philadelphia, as the media coverage and accolades he has received for his work attests.

It is unfathomable that the same person, who works tirelessly to impact young people and takes seriously his work as a role model to young people, could also be accused of engaging in behavior that is not representative of the positivity that Anthony Smith always embodies.

I join countless members of the community of Philadelphia educators and community advocates in urging that the charges against Anthony Smith be immediately dropped. This threat of a prison sentence would be a grave injustice to our community: it would rob Anthony's students of their tireless advocate; it would deny our city filled with young people who need positive examples of a model for how to make an impact in our community; and it would send a shameful message to community members that being threatened, unjustly, with baseless charges is the risk we run in engaging in community advocacy.

Sincerely,

Krystal Strong  
Assistant Professor of Black Studies in Education  
Rutgers University, New Brunswick

Raina Satija  
Philadelphia, PA 19139  
609-320-0086  
September 16th, 2022

Jacqueline C. Romero, Esq.  
United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania

Amanda Reinitz, Esq.  
Assistant United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania

The United States Attorney's Office  
Eastern District of Pennsylvania  
615 Chestnut St # 1250,  
Philadelphia, PA 19106

ATTN: Anthony Smith

Dear Ms. Romero and Ms. Reinitz.

My name is Raina Satija, and I am a social worker in the state of Pennsylvania. I am writing on behalf of my friend Anthony Smith. I've known Anthony since 2015 and since then have seen his commitment to his loved ones and community. He has inspired me and I know I can always go to him for advice. I look to him as a model in my life and work with young people. In the past two years, I have seen his commitment through his food distribution volunteering. His care and respect for his community members shines through this work.

Because of my love for him, I am writing this letter. Anthony brings his honesty and congeniality to every part of his life. I know Anthony will not only do great things for himself, but for the Philadelphia community. His path is a bright one and he is a shining star to every person he interacts with. He deserves a chance to fulfill this potential and putting him in prison would do a great disservice to the people he has helped and will help.

Thank you for your time and consideration for reading my letter. I hope you will consider my request.

Respectfully,

Raina Satija

Sarah Burgess  
4844 Cedar Ave.  
Philadelphia, PA 19143

October 10, 2022

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to update my original letter in support of Anthony Smith, which I've included below. In the two years since charges were brought against Anthony, he has never wavered in his commitment to our students and our school. As his supervisor, I have been deeply inspired by Anthony's ability to give his best at school despite his personal challenges. He does not bow out of responsibilities, but instead continues to hold his stellar attendance record, the days he has missed countable on one hand. He does not talk about what he's going through with staff or students, but instead provides the same levels of academic, mental and emotional support that he always has to those around him. He does not use these challenges as an excuse, but instead continues to grow and innovate as an educator, continuing to improve his practice and bring the best to his students.

I can only reiterate with my whole being what an integral member of YouthBuild Ant is, what a role model he is for students and staff alike, and how much he has stayed true to his excellent character during this time of adversity.

Please feel free to follow up for any employment related or character questions.

Sincerely,  
Sarah Burgess  
Director of Curriculum and Instruction  
YouthBuild Philadelphia Charter School

Sarah Burgess  
1008 South 45th Street Apt. 1  
Philadelphia, PA 19104

To Whom It May Concern:

I feel an urgent need to communicate to you what an inspiring, dedicated and beloved person Anthony Smith is, and how much of a positive impact he has on all those around him. I understand that he faces criminal charges, which in my estimation as his direct supervisor at YouthBuild, are entirely out of alignment with his outstanding character.

From the moment Ant joined the YB community, he built strong relationships with staff and students alike, and he dove into the work of inspiring students to engage in their communities and contribute to change. After a two year stint as a Community Projects Coordinator, he became our social studies teacher. The decision to hire him in this role was obvious: he clearly loved engaging with our young people; it was equally clear that our young people loved and learned from engaging with him.

With his content, Ant has shown that his motivation as an educator is to empower students to understand perspectives, to develop their own narratives, and to advocate for change based on what they know. He does not impose his beliefs. In the curriculum he is teaching right now, he asks students to explore an issue they care about, to develop an advocacy statement, to research pros and cons, and to reconsider their argument after seeing these pros and cons before finalizing their position. He is always reflective, thinking deeply about how to develop his students' critical thinking and to encourage them to be advocates.

At his core, it is clear to me that Ant cares deeply about people, and about community. He individually greets everyone who enters his classroom or who passes him in the hallway. In our community spaces he is always saying "Let's go!" to a student who is presenting, clapping enthusiastically and encouraging students to share their voices. He is not interested in the spotlight. He is interested in the wellbeing of a community. Through him, I have learned to ask questions like, how does it feel in the room, is everyone getting what they need?

Ant celebrated a birthday on a Wednesday early this October. Our school was engaged in a block clean-up that afternoon and he was out there in the mix. When I asked him about it later, he didn't share that it was his birthday, but he did share, with excitement in his voice, that he was able to meet one of our English Language Learner students in person for the first time. He is always looking to connect, to support, to lift up.

Ant is an invaluable member of our community. I hope I have conveyed how incongruent the charges leveled at him are with the gift he is to those around him.

Sincerely,

Sarah Burgess  
Director of Curriculum and Instruction  
YouthBuild Philadelphia Charter School

Lila Bhide  
619 S. 3rd St.  
Philadelphia, PA 19147  
10/10/2022

Jacqueline C. Romero, Esq.  
United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania  
Amanda Reinitz, Esq.  
Assistant United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania  
The United States Attorney's Office Eastern District of Pennsylvania 615 Chestnut St # 1250,  
Philadelphia, PA 19106

ATTN: Anthony Smith

Dear Ms. Romero and Ms. Reinitz.,

My name is Lila Bhide. I am the founder and coordinator of the Penn Food and Wellness Collaborative at the University of Pennsylvania, and I am writing to express my deepest support for Anthony Smith and to serve as a character witness. I have known Anthony for over six years. In that time we have grown close as friends, community advocates, and fellow educators. I have always known him to be an extremely kind, intelligent, supportive person. It is impossible to overstate what a selfless human being Anthony Smith really is. Despite all the challenges Anthony has faced over the past two years, his sense of optimism and positive attitude continue to shine through along with his generous approach to life. Anthony has continued to show up for me as a friend- never hesitating to make time for me to listen and offer advice. I know he has been the same way for everyone in his community- through his volunteer work, his role as a family anchor, his incredible teaching career, and as the wonderful friend I know him to be.

Anthony is truly an incredible teacher who cares so deeply about his students and their lives. As a former educator, I have always been inspired by his dedication to his students and I have frequently gone to Anthony for advice for my own classroom. Anthony's advice is always thoughtful and encouraging and he truly inspires me to push myself and the ways I can show up for my students. He goes the extra mile for the young people he teaches and I have witnessed him spend hours on planning detailed lessons, extra field trips, and bringing special guest speakers for his class. He combines his passion for teaching with his commitment to community service and frequently brings his students to volunteer for important causes, teaching them to be engaged and compassionate citizens of the world around them. I know his students see him not just as a teacher, but a mentor as well. He is someone they can turn to when dealing with the challenges they face outside of school. I have known Anthony to spend weekends and evenings helping students when they need support. While serving on the Free Ant defense committee, I have had the pleasure of speaking with some of Anthony's former students. The impact that he has had on their lives is so clear and I can only hope that someday my own former students will speak even half as positively about me. Anthony is so much more than just a social studies teacher to his students. He is a role model and a mentor. To take him away from this role would be a tragic disservice to the young people he works with.

Anthony is also an incredible asset to the community outside of the classroom. Despite his busy schedule as a teacher, Anthony is a regular volunteer for several community gardens as well as a food distribution program in his neighborhood in West Philadelphia. Anthony has continued to show up for his community as much as he can over the past few years. One thing that has always stood out to me about Anthony is that if we pass someone in distress he will always stop and help. He will give away his last dollar to a stranger on the street who is in need. Anthony is also a master of conflict resolution. I have witnessed him go out of his way to diffuse tense situations and prevent any and all violence and conflict. He has trained in restorative justice practices and is a talented mediator. It is patently absurd to think that Anthony could be considered a "threat" to the community because he does more to make his community a safer and better place than almost anyone else I know.



Anthony is also an amazing family man. He is a role model and caretaker for his younger siblings, particularly to his two younger brothers who he lives with. He frequently babysits and tutors for them, makes them food, and checks in with them at the end of his busy day. He assists his family with financial responsibilities and sacrifices personal comforts for himself to make sure he has enough money to take care of his family.

It is a genuine privilege to have Anthony Smith in your life. He leads by example and has taught me what it means to be a truly empathetic, selfless, compassionate, person. He is an asset to his family and his community and is a person who pours his heart and soul into improving the world around him.

Sincerely,

Food and Wellness Coordinator for the University of Pennsylvania

To all whom it may concern,

My co-worker Anthony Smith is one of the most outright honest and beloved educators I have ever met. I have been working at YouthBuild since 2020, throughout the time Ant has been facing charges and through unprecedented challenges in our city's schools, and all along his dedication to our young people has never let up. He treats all of our students and staff with deep respect, building relationships that last even after those students graduate or staff members leave our organization. He helps them learn to talk openly about intense and personal challenges they face, and engages our whole community in inspiring discussions about history, justice, and caring for one another. I regularly see graduates from our school, now young adults ages 20, 21, 22, return to the building to speak with Ant after the school day, share how they are doing, and ask for his advice. Our young people rely on him as a mentor, and they feel safe, comfortable and loved in the space he has helped create at our school.

We all need Ant at YouthBuild because most of our students have never had another educator look after them the way Ant does. In the last two years, so many teachers have left the field since the COVID-19 pandemic brought organizational challenges, personal traumas for our students and families, and extreme levels of violence in Philadelphia. But Ant has stayed committed steadfastly through so many trials and tragedies, out of love for our students, care for his community in Philadelphia, and dedication to our school's mission to empower young people whom other schools have left behind. Ant and our teaching staff are some of the major reasons I have decided to pursue a future career in education.

Sincerely,

Thomas Hagen  
AmeriCorps Community Projects Coordinator  
YouthBuild Philadelphia Charter School

To Whom It May Concern,

I was introduced to Anthony a few years ago and he is a very laid back person and compassionate about people and things, he is also a mannerly young man. That's something you just don't find in people in this day and time. I'm proud to know him and I support his fight for freedom.

Sincerely,  
Barbara Williams

To Whom It May Concern,

Anthony is one of a kind. He is a great person and he is needed in this community. He is always there to give advice and to help in any way he can. if you are having any problem, he will help you in the best way that he can. Not only does he help people financially, but he he is there to listen when you want to vent for hours after a long day a work. He is good at offering people a new perspective on situations, and he critiques you while still making you feel valid and heard. He helps me through my work struggles, and when I feel like I don't belong he will reassure me. He always tells me to weigh the pros and cons, and if the pros outweigh the cons it not that bad. He will always he remind you that things can be worse. He always makes time to see me even through his busy schedule. He knows how to make his family and friends feel appreciated and loved. Anthony is a funny and calming person to be around. He will let you know what he feels comfortable around and what he doesn't, and he has taught me to be clearer in setting my boundaries. He loves his family and puts his family and friends first. He is such a good friend and brother, and I'm so happy that I have gotten to know him throughout these last 10 years.

Sincerely,

James K Miles

Name: Janielle Bryan  
Address: 723 S. Ithan St, Philadelphia PA 19143  
Telephone Number: (267) 984-8120  
Date: 9/9/2022

Jacqueline C. Romero, Esq.  
United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania

Amanda Reinitz, Esq.  
Assistant United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania

The United States Attorney's Office  
Eastern District of Pennsylvania  
615 Chestnut St # 1250, t  
Philadelphia, PA 19106  
ATTN: Anthony Smith

Dear Ms. Romero and Ms. Reinitz,

My name is Janielle Bryan and I'm the Director of Community Wellness, Outreach and Strategic partnership at 11th Street Family Health Services located in Philadelphia. I've had the privilege and the pleasure of knowing Anthony Smith for the last five years. In that short span of time, I have witnessed how he has selflessly put others first. Not in ways that were easiest for him, but in ways that were most needed.

If it's one thing the last few years have taught me, and many others, is that we aren't as independent as we thought. Many of us leaned on our village to help with weather the storm during this period of universal uncertainty. Unfortunately, there are Philadelphia residents who don't have the luxury of community. Through various efforts, Anthony was able to provide community care when folks had nowhere to turn. When things became critical, he mobilized. Life doesn't stop during a pandemic. Working for the Department of Public Health during this time I saw how we and other organizations scrambled to respond to the mounting needs of the public. Without people on the ground, doing this immediate outreach, it undoubtedly would've been much worst. This is just a snapshot of what he provides his community members and those he selflessly serves.

Throughout the years I've had the privilege to watch him rise to the occasion continually. We've heard that it takes a village, but after this time we know it to be true. Philadelphia needs people like Anthony to continue to be their village. The city and organizations need people like Anthony to provide aid when they can't. His absence won't only be felt by those who call him

their friend. His reach spans communities across the city and it's not one we can afford to lose. Thank you for your time and consideration for reading my letter.

Respectfully,  
Janielle Bryan



# Lincoln University

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[www.lincoln.edu](http://www.lincoln.edu)

## Department of Biology

1570 Baltimore Pike  
Lincoln University, PA 19352-0999

484-365-7508

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to reiterate my absolute support of Anthony Smith's freedom. Throughout our friendship, Ant has been an outstanding example of courage, selflessness, and leadership. He makes it clear that his purpose is to serve community and to uplift others at all times. I have always known Ant to be a listener, a mediator, a mentor, and an all-around positive force in all spaces. He is the type of person that can change your whole day with a 30-minute conversation.

Despite the stress that this trial has caused him, he still wakes up every day with the mindset to serve. Though he is only permitted to leave the house for 10 hours a day, he makes sure that he makes every hour count. He supports his students inside and outside of the classroom through mentorship, attending events, and supporting student achievements. He still shows up every Friday to serve food with FoodNotBombs at the 46<sup>th</sup> street El stop. He still makes it to family and friends' events, and he still remembers to return everyone's phone calls. He does all of this because, despite his own situation, he still sees the value in serving others.

Anthony Smith is a compassionate, empathetic, community leader who brings joy, laughter, and peace into every space that he enters. I look forward to his freedom, because the world is a better place with him in it.

Sincerely,

*Jasmine D. Parnell-Peake*

**Jasmine Denice Parnell-Peake, Ph.D.**

**Visiting Assistant Professor of Biology**

Lincoln University

1570 Baltimore Pike, Lincoln University, PA 19352

Biology Department - Lincoln University

(484)-365-5180

Francis Rocchi  
2621 Folsom Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19130

August 18, 2022

RE: Mr. Anthony Smith (Character Letter)

To the Honorable Judge:

I am writing on behalf of Anthony Smith, my colleague and friend at Youthbuild Philadelphia Charter School. I have worked with Mr. Smith closely over the last three years of my employment at Youthbuild, and I have tremendous respect for him as a person of personal integrity, conviction, decency, and compassion. When we first received news of the charges brought against him, it was a shock to me personally and reverberated through our school community. However, in the two years since we learned this, it can be easy to forget Mr. Smith is even facing this obstacle; he never wastes a moment in self pity, preferring to channel his energy into the well-being of students and *their* fight for success and equity.

I've been privileged to partner with Anthony, and our collaboration has been intense and purposeful as we work towards creating a class that can most effectively empower our students to create positive and peaceful reform in their communities. When the temperature of our social climate has risen to a fever pitch I have seen students reach out to Mr. Smith with anger and fear over the state of their country and communities; in each and every one of those instances I have witnessed Mr. Smith help our students find productive and peaceful ways to affect change and speak truth to power. For most issues our students face, Mr. Smith ends up being the person they seek counsel from. Not just out of a sense of familiarity and friendship, but because they know he will work with them toward solutions and action - more than just someone "willing to listen." He has been a radiating calm in turbulent times, and both a model and resource for me when I seek opportunities to practice what I preach and advocate for a more just Philadelphia.

It is my sincere hope that Mr. Smith is treated with the fairness, dignity, and respect that he has treated me, his peers, and all his students with. His strength of character is demonstrated in his history of fighting for true justice, and his actions speak more eloquently to the kind of person he is than I could ever hope to. He is needed in our school and in our community.

Sincerely,

Francis Rocchi  
Literacy Specialist  
Youthbuild Philadelphia



August 29, 2022

To Whom it May Concern,

I would like to serve as a character witness for the outstanding work that Anthony Smith has consistently led at YouthBuild Philadelphia and also across the broader community in Philadelphia.

For the more than five years that I have known Mr. Smith, he has consistently given his time and energy to connect deeply with and to support young people at YouthBuild. First as an AmeriCorps member and subsequently as a classroom educator, Mr. Smith has been able to understand and believe in his students. Young people have come to rely on Mr. Smith as a trusted mentor, knowledgeable educator and a valuable friend.

Mr. Smith is intentional about setting culture by connecting academic content with the interests and passions of young people. He is well-respected by his colleagues within and well beyond the walls of YouthBuild Philadelphia.

Outside of YouthBuild, Mr. Smith actively engages in and leads a wide range of community service and community organizing activities to improve opportunities within and beyond Philadelphia. In August of 2018, AmeriCorps and the Corporation for National Community Service publicly recognized Mr. Smith as the National Full-Time AmeriCorps Member of the Year Award. The prestigious national award recognized Mr. Smith for the quality and consistency of his leadership and service in the community.

This work in connecting with and supporting young people at YouthBuild and with community members in positive ways as continued during the last two years while Mr. Smith has been on house arrest.

Mr. Smith has had a profoundly positive influence on YouthBuild, on young people, and the broader community of Philadelphia for as long as I have known him. Mr. Smith serving any time in prison would represent an extreme detriment to the health of our school community and to the broader community he serves. Our school benefits tremendously from Mr. Smith because he is a passionate educator and community leader. Any prison time away from our school community and the broader Philly community would represent a severe and crippling loss for young people across Philadelphia.

I am happy to share more details about Mr. Smith's leadership and exemplary character in these roles with anyone who would like to discuss his work.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Scott Emerick".

Scott Emerick  
Executive Director  
YouthBuild Philadelphia Charter School

**Michael Noel**

4324 Walnut St. #1F  
Philadelphia, PA 19141  
[mvnoel@gmail.com](mailto:mvnoel@gmail.com)

August 30, 2022

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Michael Noel. I have been a Philadelphia resident since 2009 and have worked in the education and nonprofit industries in Philadelphia in various capacities, having been formerly employed at YouthBuild Philadelphia Charter School and now employed at the Philadelphia Education Fund as of February 2022. In this capacity, I have known Anthony “Ant” Smith for seven years, and thus feel confident that I can continue to speak to his character.

As I indicated in a previous letter, I have known Ant since 2015, when he was hired at YouthBuild. In that letter, I noted how he “impressed me with the depth of love, care, attention and passion for his youth and community development work.” His close ties to impactful, long-standing community-based organizations have consistently generated service opportunities for over a thousand students at YouthBuild in the past seven years, and served as powerful invitations for our young people to make a lasting impact on their friends, family and neighbors. As a teacher, Ant’s project-based curriculum has allowed hundreds of our students to think and learn deeply about themselves and their communities, encouraging them to see themselves as integral to remaking their homes and neighborhoods into peaceful, thriving places for future generations.

What I find most remarkable about Ant, however, is that over the past two years, while proceedings over Ant’s charges have continued, Ant’s impact on our students and colleagues has remained steadfast, if not deepened. Ant has continued to show up, roll up his sleeves, and put students and colleagues at the center of his work each day. I have heard from countless students from the past two classes—including my own mentees, one of whom was recently named our valedictorian for the Class of 2022 after completing her Research assignment on children in the juvenile justice system for Ant’s course—discuss how Mr. Ant changed the way they thought about themselves and their communities for the better.

Considering the uncertainty over his future, I find it all the more admirable that Ant’s dedication to our students and his larger community has never wavered, and his consistent positivity and energy continues to motivate me as a now-former colleague. I believe wholeheartedly that Ant deserves to remain with his family in our community so that he can continue to do the work he does so well, the kind of work that so few others can do.

Thank you for your time and attention in this matter. I am reachable via the contact information provided above to confirm any of the contents of this letter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael Noel', with a stylized, cursive script.

**Michael Noel**



### Character Letter for Anthony Smith

I met Anthony for the first time in August of 2021 at the YouthBuild student graduation ceremony. Anthony was on stage accepting a YouthBuild award and was giving both an acceptance and motivation speech to all the graduates and their families combined. That was my first encounter and impression of Anthony. This man was accepting an award, but not using that platform to talk about himself and what he did to earn it, but to motivate and empower the audience that he stood before.

Over the course of the 10 month school year I have gotten to know Anthony quite well as his classroom is only a few feet from mine, and we work in the same Healthcare department. He has helped me navigate and get caught up on the ins and outs of this school and helped make my first year at YouthBuild as smooth as possible. In addition to him taking the time to help me I also got to see just how dedicated he is to YouthBuild as an institution and the students that we all vowed to educate.

I have watched Anthony go beyond his job description to help settle student disagreements, student concerns and questions, and make sure our students keep a clear path to graduation. Anthony has stayed with me after school hours over the past school year so we can discuss student problems that happened that day and come up with plans to solve their problems the best we could be the next school day or within that week. Those meetings happened pretty regularly as students came to Anthony and I for regular help.

Anthony has also designed an academic curriculum for students that helps prepare them to stand up for their values, and beliefs, and deal with real world circumstances that will stay with them long after their stay at YouthBuild is completed. I didn't even mention the various school activities and events that Anthony takes part in no matter how tired he may be. I always tell him to slow down but that is his nature. If it's to benefit a student he is there.

Anthony going to jail? I just can't put that thought in a sentence that would make sense. It's a long list of people that have earned a place in jail, but Anthony Smith definitely isn't one of them. If he went to jail then what happens to the students he mentors, and the ones that recently graduated them depends on him? What about the incoming students that wouldn't even get a chance to be taught and inspired by the knowledge that Anthony is waiting to teach them. Anthony deserves and should get a second chance to be a continued member of Youthbuild and the community as a whole.

Sincerely,

Harry Salmond

Healthcare Coordinator



Richard Chalme  
4207 Vesper Circle  
Palmyra, NJ 08065  
805-341-9913

8/21/2022

Re: Anthony Smith

To the honorable judge

I have had the pleasure and the honor of being a colleague of Anthony Smith for the last six years. In those six years, Anthony has had the opportunity to teach, mentor, and support the development of approximately 1,400 students and hundreds of coworkers. Each student and coworker has left that experience as a better person, a more developed person, and a more civically and community-engaged citizen. The last few years of this world have been difficult for many people. We've lived through the unknown and uncertainty and we've needed individuals to help lead us in these difficult times. Anthony has been one of these people. He has helped community members of Philadelphia deal with the difficulties of a COVID world in which the world in which we know has dramatically shifted. He has consoled individuals who have lost jobs, housing, and even family members to COVID or for other reasons. He has been a compass for so many citizens of Philadelphia navigating these difficult times.

I've never met an individual who can make you feel as cared about or supported as Anthony can. He respects all members of society regardless of race, socioeconomic status, gender, etc., and honors them in his own unique way. Quite frankly, he makes people feel valued and important. Living and working in a city where gun violence is common, people like Anthony are much needed. Anthony can help bring communities together and individuals cope with traumas.

I can attest that Anthony has made several positive contributions to the youth of Philadelphia's life. He has the skill to pull the best out of his students and make them respect their identities and strive to make the world a better place. I can honestly say that Anthony has also made me a better teacher and a better person.

It is my sincere hope that you take all of my words into consideration as the Anthony Smith that I know is an individual who cares for people, loves his community, and makes the world a better place.

Sincerely,  
*Richard Chalme*  
Richard Chalme

**ERICA GADSBY SMITH**

125 SAMUEL ST ■ FEASTERVILLE, PA 19053 ■ 215-932-4378 ■ [ERICAGADSBYSMITH@GMAIL.COM](mailto:ERICAGADSBYSMITH@GMAIL.COM)

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

I AM WRITING YOU THIS LETTER ON BEHALF OF MY COLLEAGUE AND FRIEND ANOTHY SMITH. I HAVE INCLUDED BELOW THE LETTER I WROTE TO THE COURT ALMOST TWO YEARS AGO TO SUPPORT HIS CONSIDERATION FOR BAIL RELEASE. ANTHONY WAS GIVEN SUCH CONSIDERATION AND I HAVE WORKED CLOSELY WITH ANOTHY FOR THE LAST TWO YEARS. DURING THAT TIME I CAN SAY WITH ABSOLUTE CERTAINTY THAT ANOTHY SMITH WORKS TIRELESSLY TO MAKE THE WORLD BETTER AND SAFER. HE DOES THIS IN A CLASSROOM, SUPPORTING YOUNG PEOPLE'S EDUCATION. ANTHONY TEACHES SOCIAL STUDIES; HE SUPPORTS STUDENTS GETTING THEIR DIPLOMAS WHILE LEARNING MORE ABOUT THE WORLD AROUND THEM. THIS OFTEN WITH LESSONS TO YOUNG PEOPLE ON PEACEFUL RESOLUTION AND HOW TO RESOLVE DISCORD VERBALLY. HE IS THE TEACHER THAT DAILY FACILATATES AND HELPS STUDENTS WORK OUT THEIR DIFFERENCES SO THAT THEY ALL CAN BE IN THE CLASSROOM TOGETHER SAFELY. GIVEN THE TIME WE ARE LIVING IN I CAN'T THINK OF ANY BETTER USE OF SOMEONE LIKE ANTHOY'S TIME.

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

MY NAME IS ERICA GADSBY SMITH AND I AM WRITING THIS LETTER ON BEHALF OF ANTHONY SMITH. ANTHONY SMITH IS A COLLEAGUE OF MINE AT YOUTHBUILD PHILLY CHARTER SCHOOL AND IS AN INVALUABLE MEMBER OF THE YOUTHBUILD COMMUNITY AND A POWERFUL RESOURCE FOR THE YOUNG PEOPLE THAT ARE MEMBERS OF THAT COMMUNITY. ANTHONY OR MR. ANT GIVES HIS TIME AND ENERGY TO SUPPORT THE EDUCATION OF THOSE YOUNG MEMBERS OF OUR COMMUNITY. HE PROVIDES TIME AND ENERGY TO A CLASSROOM FULL OF STUDENTS ADDITIONALLY THOUGH MR. ANT IS THERE FOR EACH ONE OF HIS STUDENTS ON AN INDIVIDUAL LEVEL, HIS DEDICATION TO THEIR SUCCESS IS EQUAL TO THEIR OWN.

LIKEWISE FOR ME PERSONALLY ANTHONY HAS BEEN VERY SUPPORTIVE, AS A NEW PROFESSIONAL IN THE FIELD; I RECENTLY GRADUATED WITH MY BACHELORS DEGREE AFTER YEARS AS A STAY AT HOME MOM OF MY THREE CHILDREN. ANTHONY PROVIDED PROFESSIONAL GUIDANCE WHENEVER I ASKED HIM. ACTUALLY ANTHONY'S SUPPORT AS A COLLEAGUE IS UNIVERSALLY FELT; IT IS OFFERED AUTOMATICALLY AND APPEARS EFFORTLESSLY. HIS SUPPORT HELPED ME GAIN CONFIDENCE

AS I CONTINUE TO DEVELOP MY PROFESSIONAL SKILLS. ANOTHY IS A HUGE PART OF YOUTHBUILD AND WHAT MAKES IT A GREAT PLACE AND A WONDERFUL COMMUNITY, HE IS THE KIND OF PERSON THAT MAKES HIS WORKPLACE AND HIS WORLD A BETTER ONE. I PRAY FOR HIS QUICK RETURN TO WHERE HE BELONGS.

ERICA GADSBY SMITH

October 1, 2022

Re: Anthony "Ant" Smith

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Gabriel Bryant and I have known Anthony Smith now for seven years. He has been a friend and, in many ways, has grown to be a brother. He has helped to improve the City of Philadelphia for the better, as both a community advocate and incredible educator. I have met many of his students and young people who he works with at Youth Build, who frequently speak highly of the impact he has had on their lives. I have seen personally, upon visiting this school as a guest speaker, the amount of respect and love that they have for him and that he has for them.

In addition, in the last couple of years, I have seen Anthony be a model of resilience, strength and motivation. He continues to be present, when he can, for community members, whether feeding them weekly as part of a mutual aid project or showing up to be a voice or lend an ear when needed. He provides a valued perspective to community relations and has been a pillar of leadership development. I have observed his mentorship to other young leaders, which has aided in influencing many other young adults to get involved in helping their communities.

In closing, I hope that you find it in your hearts to understand how much Anthony means to today's youth, to many of our city's residents and neighbors, and certainly to a future where more people can thrive, not just survive. Anthony is and has always been a beacon of light, source of friendship and a model of what we desire in the best of us.

Regards,

*Gabriel Bryant*

Gabriel Bryant

Ant Smith is an example of what it is to be a pillar of the community. I've watched him hand out food , give back teach kids and still find time to jog in his free time. He's the epitome of what happens when you're focused on a task and called to use your tools for blessings . I was so honor to find out he was teaching my little cousin at his job. Well spoken . Well liked and loved in his circle and willing to give the shirt off his back. I couldn't ask to know a better person and I know just watching him lead with such dedication pride and hope that's what i would want my child to grow into



Hannah Thompson  
Philadelphia, PA 19139  
(718) 570-6453

Jacqueline C. Romero, Esq.  
United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania

Amanda Reinitz, Esq.  
Assistant United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania

The United States Attorney's Office Eastern District of Pennsylvania  
615 Chestnut St # 1250,  
Philadelphia, PA 19106

ATTN: Anthony Smith

Dear Ms. Romero and Ms. Reinitz-

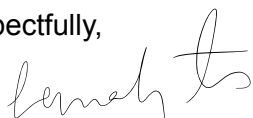
Thank you for taking the time to read this letter. My name is Hannah Thompson, and I run a farm and community garden in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. I am writing on behalf of my friend and fellow community member Anthony Smith.

I've known Ant for nearly 6 years now, largely as a friendly face in social settings, as an extremely consistent helpful hand in community spaces, and as a fellow avid basketball fan when the season is up and running. As I've come to know Ant more closely over the years, I've felt struck by how genuinely kind, generous, and committed to community he is and has always been. I've seen Ant offer up countless warm smiles and friendly words to shy new friends, and I've seen him show up week after week, rain or shine, to distribute free groceries to anyone who needs the help, no questions asked. In my experience, Ant offers his neighbors and community, from strangers to close friends, a consistency and genuine warmth that is all too rare in this world. His commitment to bettering our neighborhood is evidenced by the range of community projects he's helped out with over the years, by the quiet enthusiasm with which he approaches volunteering (even if it means arriving early and staying late to set up and break down free food tables, or to share resources and conversation with neighbors) and by the joy and candor he brings to any environment he enters. Honestly, I've learned a lot from Ant's consistency and integrity, and I feel lucky to be able to call Ant a friend and a neighbor.

I'm writing this letter today to advocate for Ant's continued presence in our community. I'm surely not alone in valuing Ant as both a well-meaning and gracious friend, and also as a pillar of dependability as a thoughtful, selfless neighbor and community leader. His ability and commitment to connecting with people of all different backgrounds and worldviews is truly something special, and his loss to our community would be felt really deeply. We need him home with us to continue laughing, to continue supporting his family, and to continue supporting our struggle for a better world. His family deserves it, his friends deserve it, and so does his community.

Thank you once again for your time and consideration. I hope you will consider my request.

Respectfully,



September 1st, 2022



# CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

## CITY COUNCIL

JAMIE R. GAUTHIER  
ROOM 586, CITY HALL  
Philadelphia, PA 19107  
(215) 686-0460 or 0459  
Fax 215-686-1929

### COMMITTEES

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Jacqueline C. Romero, Esq.  
United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania

Amanda Reinitz, Esq.  
Eastern District of Pennsylvania  
615 Chestnut St #1250  
Philadelphia, PA 19106

ATTN: Anthony Smith

Dear Ms. Romero and Ms. Reinitz,

My name is Jamie Gauthier, and I am the Councilmember for the third councilmanic District in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. I am writing in support of my constituent, Anthony Smith. I have been in awe of Anthony's service in our District through his work as a teacher and mentor, as well as his leadership in free food programs that provide our constituents with free food to have dinner on the table for their families.

I am urging that you consider why convicting Anthony will be detrimental to our District and my constituents that he serves. In a City and District where resources are scarce, leaders like Anthony are crucial to ensuring a voice is given to the voiceless. Anthony inspires other members of my District and residents in the City at large to play a more prominent role in providing basic needs for their neighbors. Losing Anthony's voice in the fight against poverty and massive disinvestment would mean losing a critical resource that all neighbors, but particularly youth, rely on every day.

Thank you for your time and consideration in reading my letter.

I hope you will consider my request.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'J. Gauthier'.

Jamie R. Gauthier  
Councilmember, 3<sup>rd</sup> District



Jeeva Muhil  
1243 S 13th St Fl #3  
267-234-4252  
10.8.2022

Jacqueline C. Romero, Esq.  
United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania  
Amanda Reinitz, Esq.  
Assistant United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania  
The United States Attorney's Office  
Eastern District of Pennsylvania  
615 Chestnut St # 1250,  
Philadelphia, PA 19106  
ATTN: Anthony Smith

Dear Ms. Romero and Ms. Reinitz.

My name is Jeeva Muhil, I am a union researcher in Philadelphia Pennsylvania. I have known Ant for five years and am writing to you on behalf of myself and the Philadelphia *Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance* (APALA). Ant is a pillar of the Philadelphia community. He has shown up continually for West Philadelphia residents and youth through his work as a teacher and his volunteering with *Food Not Bombs*. During the early days of COVID-19 Ant was instrumental in making sure low income residents had access to food, water and cleaning supplies. Despite working full time mentoring youth he has been a constant presence at community events from fundraisers to shooting vigils.

Putting Ant in prison would be a huge loss for the city of Philadelphia, and a major injury to the communities his work supports. As an organization dedicated to building Asian worker power APALA deeply appreciates Ant's tireless work to nurture Philadelphia's working class communities of color. We request that the prosecution not seek jail time for Ant Smith.

Thank you for your time and consideration for reading my letter.  
I hope you will consider my request.  
Respectfully,

**Jeeva Muhil - signing on behalf of the Philadelphia Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance**

Johana Rahman  
4508 Walnut St. Philadelphia, PA 19139  
(215)-917-5565  
08/30/2022

Jacqueline C. Romero, Esq.  
United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania

Amanda Reinitz, Esq.  
Assistant United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania

The United States Attorney's Office  
Eastern District of Pennsylvania  
615 Chestnut St # 1250,  
Philadelphia, PA 19106

ATTN: Anthony Smith

Dear Ms. Romero and Ms. Reinitz.

My name is Johana Rahman and I am a birth doula at Maternity Care Coalition in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. I am writing in support of Anthony Smith, who I have known for seven years now. Anthony has made and continues to make tremendous contributions with his volunteer work to the city of Philadelphia, the West Philadelphia community, his students, his friends, and his family. I have worked closely with him over the past two years at our volunteer run community food distribution, serving groceries every Friday. Like clockwork, Anthony is present every Friday, often early, after a long day of working with students. Even with freezing winter temperatures, unbearable summer heatwaves, and other inclement conditions he always shows up with radiant energy and a smile on his face, ready to work.

I want to give you a fuller picture of Anthony and I hope this information helps you understand what an outstanding individual he really is. He has an amazing ability to deeply connect with people. He treats everyone with such love and care, displaying empathy and genuine concern. I can say with total confidence that Anthony is a man of great principle, strong character, and an inspiration to everyone around him. He is an integral part of our community and not having him around would be a devastating loss for everyone.

It is my sincere hope that the court takes this letter into consideration at the time of sentencing. Thank you Judge for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

*Johana Rahman*  
Johana Rahman

Jossiah Whack

Philadelphia, PA, 19120

(267)455-2875

(08/28/2022)

Jacqueline C. Romero, Esq.

United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania

Amanda Reinitz, Esq.

Assistant United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania

The United States Attorney's Office

Eastern District of Pennsylvania

615 Chestnut St # 1250,

Philadelphia, PA 19106

ATTN: Anthony Smith

Dear Ms. Romero and Ms. Reinitz.

My name is Jossiah Whack and I am currently in training for a new profession in Washington D.C. Prior to this I worked 4 years for Homeland Security, TSA. I am writing this letter on behalf of my friend Anthony Smith. I first met Anthony Smith in 2009 at Arcadia University, so I have known him for roughly 14 years. Ant was always a positive and inquisitive young man in college. He loved music and was always a joy to be around. That said I never knew how much I would look up to him as an inspiration and role model to be proud to have met. Anthony Smith is one of those people you look at and just smile. Him becoming a teacher as well as a Community Leader was, and still is a blessing to Philadelphia, PA. His knowledge and understanding that he then pours into young teens, more specifically the upcoming young black men, is vital in this time and age. The city of Philadelphia needs him to help teach, nurture, and inspire our future leaders.

There is an old saying "Talk is cheap, actions speak louder than words". Anthony Smith is the first shovel in the dirt for community services. He is one of those fun and highly respected teachers you remember from your younger days in school. Even now despite house arrest, he is

still teaching and leading others. From his house alone I have seen the difference he has made on the community and future young leaders. He is a powerful, positive, and impactful person from a screen; whether on TV or on video chat. Imagine the positives he instills in others in actual person. I believe it is a disservice to not simply Philadelphia, but the United States to put him in prison. He is one of those voices of reason and understanding that are invaluable.

Thank you for your time and consideration for reading my letter.

I hope you will consider my request.

Respectfully,

Jossiah Whack



Name: Alyssa B. King  
Address: Newark, NJ, 07108  
Telephone Number: (973) 204-0653  
Date: 10/10/2022

United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania

Amanda Reinitz, Esq.  
Assistant United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania

The United States Attorney's Office  
Eastern District of Pennsylvania  
615 Chestnut St # 1250,  
Philadelphia, PA 19106

ATTN: Anthony Smith

Dear Ms. Romero and Ms. Reinitz.

My name is Alyssa King, and I am a Business Assistant and the CEO of Royal 4 Solutions in the state of New Jersey. I am writing on behalf of my dear friend Anthony Smith whom I met during our undergrad years at Arcadia University. I have known Anthony for 12 years and have had the pleasure of seeing him navigate a few life stages. There obviously hasn't been a time in his life that presented as much uncertainty as now. However, in the past two years I have seen him continue to serve his community, prioritize being an educator, optimize communication with family and friends and develop healthy coping mechanisms at a time when many may have taken another route.

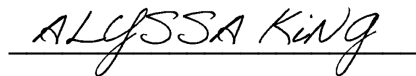
Over the past two years, Anthony has stayed true to his passions as a volunteer and an educator. As a volunteer, with minor disruption, Anthony has continued to engage the community by serving food to community members in need; on a weekly basis with *Food Not Bombs*. As an educator, (opting not to inform his current students of the past two years) Anthony understands that he serves as a resource for motivation and self-determination to a non-traditional student population at *YouthBuild*. (Even though he appreciated the support from his past students he wouldn't want to be a source of distraction in his students' already complicated lives). As it pertains to family and friends, Anthony has increased the frequency and transparency with which he communicates. The past two years have shown Anthony the importance of those hard to have conversations and the reassurance they can provide. He also continues to provide financial support to two households and serves as a caretaker (at times) to his younger siblings. Anthony has also prioritized his mental health during this time by

speaking to a therapist and running several miles on Sunday mornings; developing healthy coping mechanisms that he can continue to use in the future.

In summary, Anthony has continued to demonstrate his character, specifically his propensity for positivity and growth during the past two years. I write this letter in support of his freedom not simply because he is a dear friend of mine, but because I've been able to see his interactions and the level of support, he provides in the Philadelphia community and in the personal lives of others, both before and during this two-year period. He is certainly no threat or risk to the community or others. Anthony Smith is a hardworking, community-minded, family oriented, genuine individual with a passion for mutual aid and education. To overlook his character and conduct (especially pertaining to the pre-trial release stipulations) during this time would be unfair; if not remiss.

Thank you for your time and consideration for reading my letter. I hope you will consider my request.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "ALYSSA KING". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Alyssa B. King



**Sonalee Rashatwar LCSW MEd**

1805 W Master St, 1F  
Philadelphia PA 19121  
October 11, 2022

Jacqueline C. Romero, Esq.  
United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania  
Amanda Reinitz, Esq.  
Assistant United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania  
The United States Attorney's Office  
Eastern District of Pennsylvania  
615 Chestnut St # 1250,  
Philadelphia, PA 19106  
ATTN: Anthony Smith

Dear Ms. Romero and Ms. Reinitz.

My name is Sonalee Rashatwar, and I am a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and sex therapist in the state of Pennsylvania, practicing since 2016. I am writing on behalf of my friendship with Anthony Smith. I have known Anthony since 2014. We met community fundraising to support lower caste women from India who were touring the US to talk about sexual violence and casteism in South Asia. During the few days these vulnerable women toured Philadelphia, meeting Anthony, a gentle educator who asks thoughtful questions and knows how to make people feel safe, was a highlight for them.

I have only known Anthony to be an upstanding citizen, especially in the last 2 years during the pandemic. He obeys the laws and respects the rules and guidelines put forth by society. As a history teacher he centers his classroom around the needs of young minds. He is a friendly, helpful neighbor to his West Philadelphia community. Volunteering hours of his free time every week to collect and distribute free food, hygiene products, school supplies, and toiletries, his devotion to service clearly demonstrates his strong morals. Anthony is driven by selflessness and motivated by helping the most vulnerable.

This is why I admire Anthony and consider him a mentor as well as friend. He taught me how to be invested in social justice that centers those who need the most help like unhoused people and poor mothers. As a therapist I work with the social justice community and understand this population to be one motivated by upstanding ethics and human rights. This is consistent with how kind and generous of a heart Anthony has. I have only known Anthony to be a good community member, leader, volunteer, teacher, friend, and loved one. I am writing this letter because I know society would not benefit from sending Anthony Smith to prison. His family, students, friends, and community would suffer from such a loss. Thank you Judge for your time and consideration for reading my letter. I hope you will consider my request.

Respectfully,



Sonalee Rashatwar LCSW MEd  
NJ#44SC05825900  
PA# CW020517



To whom it may concern,

I hope you are in good health and spirits.

My name is Kempis Songster. I work with the Youth Art & Self-empowerment Project. Specifically, I am program manager of YASP's restorative justice diversion program called Healing Futures, which is facilitated in partnership with the District Attorney's Office. I write this letter to you on behalf of Anthony ("Ant") Smith. However, to appreciate more fully the importance of Ant to my own personal development as a human being perhaps something of my own narrative is necessary.

December 28, 2022, will be the fifth anniversary of my return to the community, after more than thirty years of incarceration that began at the age of 15. My time back in the wide-open world has been marked by milestones I did not foresee. I've become a husband, a father, and a respectable voice in the community. I am happy to be counted among the ranks of people who, after being imprisoned for causing harm in the community, have returned to do right by the community. My story has played out in the public square to some degree due to media coverage. Yet, I believe the most important aspects of it have gone unsung. I speak of the ones who made my growth and transformation possible. I count Ant Smith among the contributors to who I am today.

Certainly, my family and the mentors I had the fortune of meeting behind prison walls have planted and cultivated the seeds of redemption in me. But, those seeds continue to receive light and nourishment from people who I've met as a returning community member. Ant Smith is one of the individuals who have continued to motivate me to become a better human.

From his leadership in community organizations, to his devotion to the growth and development of our community's young people, as a schoolteacher, to his dedication as a family member, Ant has been for me a profound example of what it means to be a whole person. From community conversations and meetings, to classrooms, to public rallies, Ant has consistently demonstrated what it means to be socially responsible. I always looked forward to hearing Ant speak, for I knew he would deliver a message of hope and direction for everyone in the audience, for the city of Philadelphia at large, and for me personally. I always left Ant's presence feeling beholden to a higher standard of humanity and morality.

The last time I saw and spoke with Ant Smith was a continuation of the positive and inspiring nature of our interactions. I drove him in my car from City Hall, where he had raised his voice with others about injustices in the community, to Malcolm X Park, where he would speak to the community some more. During the drive, Ant talked about young people in our community and ideas he had for reducing the violence among them. We made plans to connect and collaborate on some of those ideas. Just hours later, after returning home, I learned that Ant had been arrested. I was shocked and heartbroken. I couldn't believe that the person who just was talking with me from the backseat of my car about community service, ending gun violence, and lifting our voices about injustice, was now in the situation I had spent 30 years and three months in. I did not seem right.

It pains me that a compassionate and gentle soul someone such as Ant has not been able to live his life free and in service of the community the way he deserves and how the community needs him to be. Sending Ant to prison would send a dissuasive message to young people who are in dire need of examples of how to be more responsible and contributing community members. Families and communities that are already demoralized and at their wits end about the state of our city's young people will only be plunged deeper into despair by the imprisonment of one of the most beloved voices of conscience in our community, i.e., Ant Smith. With neighborhoods drowning in the rising tidal wave of gun violence, carjackings, and drug addiction, sending Ant to prison would be one of the least helpful things that could be done.

Ant's example continues to inspire me to deeper levels of service to the community, especially to our children. I carry out my work as program manager of the city's first pre-charge restorative justice diversion program for youth, largely with the inspiration of Ant. So meaningful has Ant's impact on my life been that all this time later, unbeknownst to him, he continues to push me to a higher destiny even while he is on the downside of destiny.

I pray that Ant will be allowed to live his life totally free and that the community will be allowed to benefit from the continued presence and service of one of our most beloved and positive members.

Thank you very much. Please stay healthy, hardy, hopeful, and high-spirited.

In gratitude and community,

Kempis Songster





Stouffer College House

3702 Spruce Street, Box 300  
Philadelphia, PA 19104-6012  
Phone: (215) 573-3741  
Fax: (215) 573-4632  
<http://stouffer.house.upenn.edu>

Jacqueline C. Romero, Esq.  
United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania

Amanda Reinitz, Esq.  
Assistant United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania

The United States Attorney's Office  
Eastern District of Pennsylvania  
615 Chestnut St # 1250,  
Philadelphia, PA 19106

ATTN: Anthony Smith

Dear Ms. Romero and Ms. Reinitz,

My name is Amber Williams, and I am a Director and Advisor at the University of Pennsylvania. I am writing on behalf of my friendship with Anthony Smith. I have known him since 2012, as we met during our shared tenure at Arcadia University for undergraduate work. Anthony has always been a sweet guy, a deep thinker, and a caring person, whose care extends far beyond his circle of friends. In the past 2 years since his release, Anthony has continued to teach in the school district of Philadelphia, creating strong bonds with students and supporting the leaders of tomorrow by ensuring they leave his classroom better than they entered. He also continues to support his community members through offering his time for community education events on the weekends, and amplifying issues that concern the well-being of the wider community of Black people in Philadelphia and America at large through his social media presence and activism.

Anthony being freed has only continued to further enhance the lives of those around him and of future generations to come through his passion as an educator. His wrongful return to prison would strip students of a quality education, his family and friends of his warmth and acts of service, and his community from having a reliable and dependable advocate. Please consider these ramifications as you make your decision.

Thank you Judge for your time and consideration for reading my letter. I hope you consider my request.



Respectfully,  
Amber Williams

*Amber Williams*

To Whom it May Concern-

I am writing today on behalf of a friend and former colleague, Anthony Smith. Between 2018 and 2020, Anthony and I worked together at YouthBuild Philadelphia Charter School. As a fellow educator, I admired Anthony greatly in his work with our students as well as our fellow staff. He was and he remains an incredibly important and respected member of our school community. I have spoken at length about this in a previous letter, so will not go into great detail on it here. I will simply summarize by saying that Anthony has been a loving and guiding presence for hundreds of YouthBuild students, especially those that other staff found it most difficult to connect with. He has changed many lives for the better, and I have no doubt he will continue to do so.

It is precisely for this reason that I believe it is so important for him to remain out of prison and within his community in the months and years to come. His students, family, friends, and neighbors all benefit from his presence and the consistent labor he puts into supporting each of the communities he is a part of. Even since being placed on house arrest, Anthony has continued to teach and mentor, while spending his weekends distributing free food and other essentials in West Philadelphia. In short, his school, his neighborhood, and his city are better places when he is able to be an active part of them.

I can say with full confidence that Anthony is one of the most caring, supportive, and hardworking people I have ever had the pleasure to meet and work alongside. I hope you will consider this, and the full scope of his work in the Philadelphia community, in considering what happens next.

Thank you so much for your time.

Sincerely,

Francis Strickler

Special Education Teacher  
Trinity Academy of Performing Arts  
Providence, RI

**Asantewaa Nkrumah-Ture**  
**5006 Cedar Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19143**

**202-821-5223**

September 3, 2022

Jacqueline C. Romero, Esq.  
U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania

Amanda Reinitz, Esq.  
Assistant U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania

U.S. Attorney's Office  
Eastern District of Pennsylvania  
615 Chestnut Street, # 1250  
Philadelphia, PA 19106

**RE: Anthony "Ant" Smith**

Dear Ms. Romero and Ms. Reinitz,

I work as an Administrative Assistant and community organizer here in this city and I am again proudly and without any hesitation writing this letter in total support of my friend and colleague, **Anthony "Ant" Smith**.

I first met him 7 years ago when I moved here from Washington, DC. He and his other friends welcomed me warmly to this city and informed me of local historical places to visit such as the Paul Roberson House, the John Coltrane House, Hakim's Bookstore, all here in West Philadelphia; he also shared information on how to find housing. He has always been very warm, friendly, funny, patient and generous in sharing ideas and information. As anyone that knows him will tell you, *he is truly a joy and blessing to be around*.

His passions for the community and social justice are his hallmark. I have heard him give numerous speeches urging people to get more involved, but he never resorts to violent words or cursing. If anything, he is always the one that stays focused and disciplined, using silly jokes to assure calm.

I have worked with him on various projects and I have found him to consistently be the best prepared and *the least likely to engage in any violence*. He is known to have the best skills in de-escalation and I have witnessed this first hand.

He is also a great teacher, loved and well respected by his students and other young



people; he talks fondly of them often. He is also well known to accept, embrace and respect his students as they are, encouraging, protecting and advocating for those that may face bullying because they are LGBTQIA. *Now more than ever, teachers like him are what we need in our schools.*

Lastly, if there is anyone that truly cares about others, it is Ant Smith. Back in February, he and some of his friends came to my house as there was an attempt to illegally evict me. They came over to make sure I was ok, to make sure I had food, etc. He is a beloved, treasured member of the wider community where his advice is often sought and his example inspires. In closing, **Anthony "Ant" Smith** is a beloved son, friend, colleague and community member that should be allowed to be free so that he may continue to make great contributions to our community.

Sincerely,



Asantewaa Nkrumah-Ture



Samantha Pinto

September 6, 2022

Jacqueline C. Romero, Esq.

United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania

Amanda Reinitz, Esq.

Assistant United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania

The United States Attorney's Office Eastern District of Pennsylvania 615 Chestnut St # 1250,  
Philadelphia, PA 19106

ATTN: Anthony Smith

Dear Ms. Romero and Ms. Reinitz.

I would like to speak to the character of Anthony Smith. I know Anthony through our mutual friends, and he is one of those people who immediately leaves an impression on you. Anthony is a thoughtful, creative and dedicated educator in our schools. His passion for teaching is evident in everything he does. He is well loved and admired by so many people here in Philadelphia. I personally look up to Anthony for his intelligence, his natural leadership, and the kindness he shows to everyone around him. As a lifelong Philadelphian and an essential healthcare worker, I consider Anthony an indispensable asset to our community. He is also a person of great integrity and honesty.

Thank you for taking my letter into consideration.

Sincerely,

Samantha Pinto, B.A. Temple University

Patient Services Coordinator

Penn Medicine Health System

Philadelphia, PA

Name: Kitty Heite  
Address: 5043 Hazel Ave, Philadelphia  
PA 19143  
Telephone Number: 302-898-8200  
Date: 09/15/22

Jacqueline C. Romero, Esq.  
United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania  
Amanda Reinitz, Esq.  
Assistant United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania  
The United States Attorney's Office  
Eastern District of Pennsylvania  
615 Chestnut St # 1250,  
Philadelphia, PA 19106

ATTN: Anthony Smith

Dear Ms. Romero and Ms. Reinitz,

My name is Kitty Heite and I am an administrative assistant in Pennsylvania.

I am writing on behalf of my friend, Anthony Smith. I have known Ant through various community support projects as well as just being in the same neighborhood for years. Ant has always been a loving, caring member of the community, and even encouraged me to get out and run during COVID.

I have seen Ant shepherd groups of teenagers through exploring nature, go grocery shopping for elderly neighbors and family members and take time to check in with an acquaintance who looked upset just because he could. He regularly helps pack groceries that are then distributed to neighbors for free. His open countenance, his people centered approach to his work and life and his overall joy makes him a remarkable community member and friend. Losing Ant's presence in our community would be a net negative to everyone, not to mention harmful to him. I personally care deeply about protecting and caring for his beautiful, indomitable spirit not just as a member of the community but as an individual.

Thank you for your time and consideration for reading my letter. I hope you will consider my Request.

Respectfully,  
Kitty Heite

Imrul Mazid  
329 S. 42nd St, Apt D7  
Philadelphia, PA 19104  
(215) 510-7640

October 10, 2022

Jacqueline C. Romero, Esq.  
United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania

Amanda Reinitz, Esq.  
Assistant United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania

The United States Attorney's Office  
Eastern District of Pennsylvania  
615 Chestnut St, #1250  
Philadelphia, PA 19106

ATTN: Anthony Smith

Dear Ms. Romero and Ms. Reinitz,

My name is Imrul Mazid, and I am an educator residing in Pennsylvania. I am writing on behalf of my friend and community member, Anthony Smith, whom I have known for three years.

One of my earliest interactions with Anthony centered around youth development and classroom teaching. Both of us work in a similar field, and I was immediately struck by his commitment towards his students. Despite the struggles of the pandemic, Anthony has been an upstanding citizen, serving as a steadfast leader and role model for young Philadelphians. I periodically see Anthony at community events, where he often feeds and clothes indigent populations.

I am enthusiastically writing this letter in support of Anthony's freedom. His incarceration would sever ties with his students, neighbors, and loved ones, imposing a net cost upon society. This creates unnecessary ruptures and perpetuates waves of harm. Anthony Smith is a tremendous asset to our community and I unreservedly attest to his character as a human being.

Thanks for your time and consideration. I hope you will consider my request in support of Anthony Smith.

Sincerely,

Imrul Mazid



September 3, 2022

Jacqueline C. Romero, Esq.  
U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania

Amanda Reinitz, Esq.  
Assistant U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania

U.S. Attorney's Office  
Eastern District of Pennsylvania  
615 Chestnut Street, # 1250  
Philadelphia, PA 19106

**RE: Anthony "Ant" Smith**

Dear Ms. Romero and Ms. Reinitz,

We the **Green Party of Philadelphia** are again gladly writing this letter to express our enthusiastic support of **Anthony "Ant" Smith**, nearly two years after he was first arrested.

Over the years, many of us have seen him at various community social justice events. And just like many other activists, we also know him as a very caring and compassionate teacher, the kind that brings insightful social justice ideas to the social science studies of his students. Thus, we continue to have great admiration for his work as he provides the kind of consistent, energetic, courageous young leadership our community needs. ***Ant is a true inspiration to many young people, especially young Black men. He is very focused, fun-loving yet disciplined, never violent.***

He is also a great teacher, loved and well respected by his students and other young people; he talks fondly of them often. He is also well known to accept, embrace and respect his students as they are, encouraging, protecting and advocating for those that may face bullying, especially those that are LGBTQIA. ***Now more than ever, teachers like him are***

*what we need in our schools.*

*Ant is needed by his family and he is truly a beloved community member. We want him here with all of us, not in prison.*

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

The Green Party of Philadelphia  
215-843-4256  
gpop@gpop.org

10/8/2022

Re: Ant Smith

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing a letter regarding Ant Smith. My friendship with Ant started because I was drawn to him after hearing him speak at a couple of schools in West Philadelphia. I was impressed with his apparent love and compassion both for our community and clear information. His comments were heartfelt and educational. Being a community volunteer myself, I began to work more closely with him over years. He showed great consistency and dependability, and the care I observed in his comments early on were ever present in his actions. I learned he was himself an educator, and also learned of his dedication to his students. I ran into his students from time to time, and they always spoke of their love for him as among their favorite teachers - quite often their very favorite. He inspired his students in the classroom and was there for them as whole people. Hearing this from students resonated with me because when I had struggles myself in my own life, he was also there for me. I had an incident of great distress, heartbreak and sadness, and Ant was able to comfort me in a ways that stuck with me and helped me throughout my mourning period. He was by my side for several struggles, and I observed him be there in this way for several other people.

Over the last two years, Ant has himself experienced some sadness and frustration. He understands the importance of mental and physical health to being a good community member. He used this to push himself to increase his own self care. I could see his determination to be healthy was completely tied with his intention to show up for others. In the same way, in spite of travel and time limitations, he would find ways to be there for people who needed him. His commitment to actually showing up, to walking the talk of love for your community, is among the strongest I've seen - and I know a lot of people who deeply love and believe in the importance of a caring community.

I am part of a large community of people who know each other and who have never met each other whose lives have been touched in deeply positive, lasting ways by Ant Smith.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'YahNé Ndgo Baker', written over a horizontal line.

YahNé Ndgo Baker

Rufus Farmer

Yeadon, PA., 19050

267-679-8709

8/30/2022

Jacqueline C. Romero, Esq.

United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania

Amanda Reinitz, Esq.

Assistant United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania

The United States Attorney's Office

Eastern District of Pennsylvania

615 Chestnut St # 1250,

Philadelphia, PA 19106

ATTN: Anthony Smith

Dear Ms. Romero and Ms. Reinitz.

My name is Rufus Farmer. I am a veteran of the United States Marine Corps and a social work student in the state of Pennsylvania. I am writing on behalf of my friend Anthony Smith. I have known Anthony for seven years. During the past two years Anthony has consistently performed volunteer work for an organization, of which I am also a member, that provides free food in West Philadelphia every Friday evening. Anthony has not only provided food to individuals who approached on foot, he has on many occasions taken bags of food to people who were in their vehicles, oftentimes jogging to get the food to those vehicles before the traffic light turned green. Along with putting food in people's hands, Anthony makes time for conversation. It may be small talk; it may even be a joke or an affirmation. Anthony is always engaging, always pleasant. His enthusiasm for helping people is extraordinary. Also, Anthony not only helps with distributing food, he assists with packing the food and has contributed valuable input during meetings and less formal conversations about the organization's processes. Anthony has performed this volunteer work countless times, in most cases immediately after the end of a laborious work week as a school teacher.

I am writing this letter in support of Anthony Smith, who is not only a kind, genuine person, but someone who consistently attempts to improve the lives of other people. Anthony has shown a remarkable commitment to improving society, sacrificing countless hours of his own time in the process. Should Anthony be sentenced to prison, Philadelphia would lose someone who is selflessly committed to the well-being of society. What's more, the organization through which Anthony voluntarily provides free food to people in West Philadelphia would lose someone who has an incredibly positive influence on the

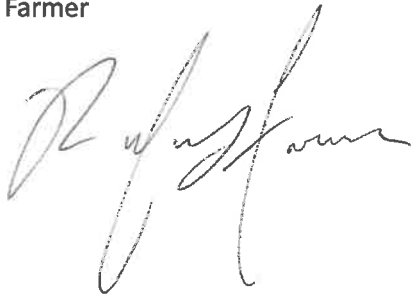
rest of the team, whose enthusiasm is contagious and consistently lifts the spirits of others. (I would be remiss if I did not mention the impact of Anthony's passion for running. Anthony loves to run on Sundays, and for this reason a small group of people, each of whom belong to the volunteer food group that Anthony is a member of, has taken to running with Anthony on Sundays, not merely as a fitness endeavor, but for camaraderie.)

Thank you Ms. Romero and Ms. Reinitz for your time and consideration for reading my letter.

I hope you will consider my request.

Respectfully,

Rufus Farmer

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rufus Farmer". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "R" and a long, sweeping underline.





YouthBuild Philadelphia Charter School  
1231 N. Broad St., 5<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Philadelphia PA 19122  
(P) 215-627-8671  
(F) 215-763-5774

To the Commonwealth:

I am a case manager at YouthBuild Philadelphia Charter School and have had the pleasure of working with Anthony Smith since January 2021. Anthony and I are in the same graduation pathway system (GPS) group, which means we work closely together to support our caseload of students in graduating. This includes participating in GPS meetings, engaging in the classroom together, communicating about students one-on-one, and creating action plans to support students in reaching their goals.

Two of Anthony's main goals are to connect with each student and improve their social-emotional skills. He roams the hallways in the morning before class to greet every student and staff person he comes across. He quickly builds rapport with students by being genuine, using humor, and providing a welcoming, classroom environment. It is amazing to see how quickly students trust him and feel comfortable sharing the details of their personal lives. Because of that rapport, students seek him out for emotional support or while experiencing conflict. He uses his relationship with students to intervene in ways that meet them where they're at, hold students accountable for their actions, and improve how they communicate and regulate their emotions.

I look up to Anthony and seek his advice in my professional and personal life. He quickly analyzes a situation and identifies the best solutions based on context, personalities, strengths, needs, and areas of growth. He incorporates all of these factors into his perspective, which allows him to see the full picture and identify effective solutions.

Anthony is not just a colleague; he is also my friend. I met him at YouthBuild less than 3 months after moving to Philadelphia. Building community in a new city during a pandemic was a challenge and continues to be challenging. Having Anthony as one of my main local friends has significantly contributed to having a positive experience in Philadelphia. I am thankful to have such a kind, intentional, and reliable friend. I know he has impacted many of his friends, family, and community members in powerful ways and will continue doing so throughout his life.

Respectfully,

*Kali Thomas*

***Success Coordinator***

Cell: 267-938-0581

kthomas@youthbuildphilly.org

***Rebuilding Lives and Communities***

[www.youthbuildphilly.org](http://www.youthbuildphilly.org)



Updated August 22, 2022

To Whom It May Concern,

I write in strong, enthusiastic support of Anthony Smith. I have known Anthony for five years in the context of YouthBuild Philadelphia Charter School, where we work together as teachers and mentors with young people.

During the past two years when Anthony has been on house arrest we have worked especially closely together, creating and teaching linked classes to a shared group of students. During this period Anthony and I have spent considerable time working together in each other's classroom, and of course also collaborating as part of the overall YouthBuild community. Anthony has brought positive energy and deep caring for his students and community into the workplace every day. His presence is inspirational, not only for the many students who spend time in his classroom, but also for me and other staff who have the opportunity to work with Anthony.

I have witnessed Anthony's positive impact in so many ways, including his commitment to reaching and teaching students of all identities and interests; his expertise as a mentor, coaching individuals through whatever challenges and opportunities they are facing; and his unconditional and consistently demonstrated respect for all students as well as staff. As one example, all of these qualities were strongly in evidence at the student presentations/events we hosted last year, which gave students an opportunity to make a positive difference in the community.

Anthony is one of the finest human beings and educators I know. He is caring and deeply principled, as well as respectful and hardworking. In his work with students Anthony demonstrates a huge capacity for developing strong relationships with students and supporting them in their work toward their goals. Anthony is a diligent and highly effective practitioner who nurtures his students in developing their critical capacities, research skills,

and communications skills. Anthony is an excellent role model for students, and he is also humble and focused on doing his work in the interest of the greater good. He believes in the power of community to love and support each other, and he lives this belief every day.

It is a pleasure and an honor to know and work with Anthony. I speak here as strongly as possible on Anthony's behalf. His integrity, compassion, and ability to relate to all kinds of people make him a man of truly admirable character, an invaluable asset to our community and our world, and certainly someone who should not have to serve prison time. He has so much to contribute, and does so on a daily basis!

Please let me know if I can provide any additional information.

Sincerely,

Jody Cohen, Ph.D  
YouthBuild Philadelphia Charter School  
jcohen@youthbuildphilly.org



**Founder Mike Africa, Jr.**

A Voice for the Children Of Incarcerated Parents

Our Mission Is To Inspire People To Thrive

To whom it may concern:

I first met Anthony at YouthBuild where he was teaching a class of young people about some history of Philadelphia. As an activist myself, my mission is to “inspire people to be better.” Young people face many challenges and depending on their childhood circumstances many young people face more challenges than others. Anthony Smith is one who provides support for these young people through knowledge and education. I know of the positive impact he’s had on people because at least three of the children he’s taught are from my own family who are doing better in life than they would have been without Anthony’s influence.

As much as Philadelphia needs black male teachers and role models, it would be a real shame if these already struggling young people lost Anthony. I can’t stress enough how important Anthony has been to my family and community, I am willing to offer whatever support I can to assist him in his continued work.

Peace, Healing & Love

Mike Africa, Jr.

“The Best Way To Be, Is The Best You Can Be.”

Anna Latshaw

2653 East Thompson St

Philadelphia, PA 19125

10/06/2022

RE: Character Reference for Anthony Smith

Your Honor,

The aim of this letter is to present the good character of Anthony Smith. We worked together for three years at YouthBuild Philly Charter School. In that time I have had the privilege of witnessing his diligent, considerate and resilient character as a mentor, educator and leader in our community. Which is why I felt compelled to write this letter when learning that Mr. Smith had been charged with arson and related acts of destruction. The charges against Mr. Smith would characterize him as reckless and destructive, which is in stark contrast to how I have seen him set an example of personal accountability and investment. I have witnessed first hand how he has dedicated his life and career to teaching the value of peace and thoughtfulness to the youth of our city.

Mr. Smith gives all of his time and energy to servicing and building up his community, whether that is our students and alumni at YouthBuild or his immediate neighbors. He works tirelessly to bring meaningful, relevant instruction that excites our students to be critically thinking learners. Students have recounted to me that in Mr. Smith's classes they talk about real things and he really wants to hear what they are thinking.

As an educator he is very gifted and works to develop the critical thinking skills of young adults so that they can make rational and clear decisions about what is important to them. As his colleague I have been the beneficiary of his ability to listen to people and also share his insight and wisdom without asking others to agree with him. In this way he builds bridges among staff and students by being a safe person with whom one can talk about difficult situations. His work at YouthBuild and his role in the community is a long term calling. He has been working to provide basic resources to his community and also advocating for justice for many years and knows that real change does not happen overnight. Just like he teaches in his classes Mr. Smith is a careful and measured person who is committed to fostering the wellbeing of all people. His work of advocacy and community support is not a flash in the pan, but a long term commitment that requires deliberate and careful choices to make sure his community is heard. He

...kes care to process the emotions he feels about the circumstances of today without putting them on others. He knows that his voice and leadership needs to remain steady, positive and full of hope, never destructive or violent. Working alongside Mr. Smith in the two years he has been under house arrest I can say that he remains deeply committed to the education of young people and the care of his community. Each year a new group of students got to encounter a steady, patient and brilliant teacher where they could explore challenging discussions, respectfully disagree with one another and learn new perspectives. The loss of Mr. Smith from the classroom and community would be felt deeply as his gifts are unique and his resilience in the role is outstanding.

I hope this letter will give you an idea of his exceptional character and will cast doubt on the validity of the accusation made against him.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:  
  
197F61CE274C46C...

Anna Latshaw

Tina Furr  
1305 N Lawrence Street Apt 1  
Philadelphia, PA 19122  
267-456-6466

9/4/2022

Jacqueline C. Romero, Esq.  
United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania  
Amanda Reinitz, Esq.  
Assistant United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania  
The United States Attorney's Office  
Eastern District of Pennsylvania  
615 Chestnut St # 1250,  
Philadelphia, PA 19106

ATTN: Anthony Smith

Dear Ms. Romero and Ms. Reinitz,

My name is Tina Furr, and I've lived in Philadelphia all my life. I work for a reproductive justice non-profit organization.

I am writing on behalf of my friend Anthony Smith. I've known Anthony for about 6 years and in this time, I've known him to be a caring friend, teacher, and community member.

Anthony brings people together because he is patient, empathetic, and of course, hilarious. His positive energy and playfulness are infectious! To imagine the community without him feels heartbreaking because he brings so much light to those he cares for and he makes a point to serve his community while encouraging others to do the same. He is also a brilliant thinker and educator. I personally have gained wisdom from conversations with him and his approach to teaching is always centered with compassion. He practices humility in the way he speaks, because while brilliant, he recognizes that we all have opportunities to grow and change for the better.

To not have Anthony in our lives would be a huge loss to me, his students, and his loved ones. While I can only speak for myself, I would not be surprised to hear it echoed that we need Anthony in our lives and close to our community for us to feel whole.

Thank you for your time and consideration for reading my letter. I sincerely hope you will consider my request.

Respectfully,  
Tina Furr





Cindy Lou Miller

4725 Chester Ave, Phila., PA 19143

August 26, 2022

Jacqueline C. Romero, Esq.

United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania

Amanda Reinitz, Esq.

Assistant United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania

The United States Attorney's Office Eastern District of Pennsylvania 615 Chestnut St # 1250,  
Philadelphia, PA 19106

ATTN: Anthony Smith

Dear Ms. Romero and Ms. Reinitz.

My name is Cindy Miller and I am a retiree in the state of Pennsylvania. I am writing on behalf of my close friend Anthony Smith.

I have known Anthony since his college years, but in recent times, I can speak to Anthony's strength and consistency when every Friday he comes out with our organization to pack Resource/Food bags to distribute to the community. Even on days that he must be tired from teaching, he still makes it a point to help. That is true dedication! This is an important activity for Anthony, and we depend on his presence every week.

And despite the fact that Anthony is many years younger than me, I often ask him for advice or to talk over troubling issues. I find that his clear perspective on matters is a great help.

I'm writing this letter to let you know what an important resource Anthony is to our community. There would be no benefit to locking him in jail, as he brings nothing but positivity to all who he interacts with. (Don't forget about the students he helps by his teaching)  
Our community would only profit from Anthonys' hard work and clear thinking, sense of humor and upbeat attitude, which make him easy to work with.

Thank you for your time and consideration for reading my letter. I hope you will consider my request.

Respectfully,

Cindy Lou Miller

Name: Abbas Naqvi  
Address: 5043 Hazel Ave, Philadelphia  
PA 19143  
Telephone Number 631-875-5794  
Date: 08/27/22

Jacqueline C. Romero, Esq.  
United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania

Amanda Reinitz, Esq.  
Assistant United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania

The United States Attorney's Office  
Eastern District of Pennsylvania  
615 Chestnut St # 1250,  
Philadelphia, PA 19106

ATTN: Anthony Smith

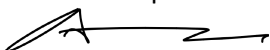
Dear Ms. Romero and Ms. Reinitz.

My name is Abbas Naqvi, and I am a research scientist in the state of Pennsylvania at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. I am writing on behalf of my friend Anthony Smith. I have known Anthony for at least five years now and can confidently attest to his sincerity, uprightness, and goodness he brings to the community. He is an exceptional human being and benefits the community tremendously.

For several years, I would often meet him at teach-ins, community events, and books clubs where we would participate in. His contributions were always very thoughtful and nuanced that would always lead to important discussions on how we can help our struggling city and community. I am also fully aware of the unconditional support he provides for his students and mentees. He would often bring up stories and interactions of them in conversation. As I collaborate and partner up with school districts across the city for my own professional work, I know that individuals like Anthony are good for society. Irrefutable evidence and studies have repeatedly shown that black teachers have a natural positive impact on black and brown students. For example, the likelihood of students applying to colleges and choosing noteworthy careers significantly increases. Anthony goes above and beyond. But Anthony does not stop there. He has also been intimately involved with distributing food and care packages in West Philadelphia a historically disenfranchised part of the city. I have had the honor to participate in a few such activities, but he has consistently done this for years on in, not only helping his fellow community, but also has served an inspiration for me, personally.

Society would be at a loss if he was stripped of the things, he loves to do by being thrown in prison. Not only would he suffer, but his students, mentees, community members, friends and loved ones will all suffer. There will be no benefit in sending him. Thank you for your time and consideration for reading my letter. I hope you will consider my request.

Respectfully,  
Abbas Naqvi





Deandra Jefferson  
1755 N Taney St,  
Philadelphia, PA 19121  
(267) 303-8358  
10/10/2022

Jacqueline C. Romero, Esq.  
United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania

Amanda Reinitz, Esq.  
Assistant United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania

The United States Attorney's Office  
Eastern District of Pennsylvania  
615 Chestnut St # 1250,  
Philadelphia, PA 19106

ATTN: Anthony Smith

Dear Ms. Romero and Ms. Reinitz.

My name is Deandra Jefferson, and I am an accountant in the state of Pennsylvania.. I am writing on behalf of my friend and colleague Anthony Smith. I have known Anthony for seven years, in a personal and community organizing capacity, and I have seen the way that he has positively impacted his loved ones and the community at large through his impeccable conflict resolution skills and his steady drive to take care of those around him. For the past two years, while remaining an engaged and beloved social studies teacher at Youth Build Charter School, he has also continued community engagement by helping serve free food to the community each Friday as a part of Food not Bombs Solidarity.

Anthony truly has a heart for people, and he makes this evident in every aspect of his life. He is an important part of multiple ecosystems, and is truly someone who tries to improve every space he's in. He is an invaluable part of his family, friend circle, and the City of Philadelphia at large. The way he moves is from a genuine place of love, and he is exactly the type of person we need in this world. Please consider what a hole his absence would leave in the lives of many were he to be taken from us.

Thank you for your time and consideration for reading my letter. I hope you will consider my request.

Respectfully,

Deandra Jefferson

October 7, 2022

To whom it may concern:

I am writing this letter to reiterate and emphasize my support for Anthony Smith, who I have known and worked with closely for the past five years. Anthony continues to impress me with his tremendous work ethic and deep care for students and their lives and experiences. Through the intense difficulties and uncertainties of the past two years, as we navigated online schooling and supporting students as they return to classrooms in person, Anthony has remained a consistent presence and support for students' education and post-secondary success. It continues to be an honor for me to work with him and to support our multilingual students. In the past few weeks, I have seen students who are having their first experience in US schools grow and begin to find their voices in his classroom, as they engage with the content and with other students. I have learned so much from Anthony about building classroom community and modeling interactions with students with the highest level of support and challenge. I continue to be grateful for the opportunity to work alongside him and for his intentionality and care in all his work with students and colleagues.

*From original October 30, 2020 letter:*

*Anthony is a person of the highest integrity and compassion. He demonstrates his deep commitment to and love for his community every day. His kindness, empathy, and leadership is a model for our school community and the world beyond. He brings joy to every day and every class.*

*In the classroom, Anthony centers students' wellbeing and development, ensuring that every student is welcomed and valued, and honored. I work with immigrant students who are relatively new to the country, and it has been my pleasure to collaborate with Anthony to design instruction. Anthony has worked so hard to make sure they, and all students, are welcomed in the classroom, have full access to content, and support them to contribute their unique experiences and knowledge to the class while developing their language and communication skills.*

*Outside the classroom, Anthony is deeply committed to working for social justice, feeding and caring for communities, and working to keep everyone in the community safe. His work is valuable beyond measure. It has been an honor and privilege for me to know and work with Anthony, and I am writing to express my fullest support for him and for his quick return to our community.*

I appreciate your time and consideration of this letter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rebecca Wanner", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Rebecca Wanner, MEd



Abolitionist Law Center  
P.O. Box 8654  
Pittsburgh, PA 15221  
[abolitionistlawcenter.org](http://abolitionistlawcenter.org)

The Honorable Juan R. Sanchez  
United States District Court  
Eastern District of Pennsylvania  
14613 U.S. Courthouse  
601 Market Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19106  
Courtroom 14-B

Dear Judge Sanchez:

We write on behalf of the Abolitionist Law Center to provide you with a letter detailing our appreciation and unwavering support for Anthony (Ant) Smith.

The Abolitionist Law Center is a private non-profit law firm based in Pennsylvania. Through litigation, policy advocacy, and public education efforts, ALC seeks to end the system of mass incarceration by calling attention to prison conditions, direct representation of individuals, and impact litigation and advocacy work.

The Abolitionist Law Center, along with the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, and Kairys, Rudovsky, Messing, Feinberg & Lin, and the Advocacy for Racial Justice Clinic at the University of Pennsylvania Law School represented Mr. Smith and other West Philadelphia residents in their suit regarding the teargassing of West Philadelphia residents in their homes and in their neighborhoods. Mr. Smith served as our lead plaintiff.

Mr. Smith exemplifies the spirit of the residents and community members we represent. He is willing to pull the oar and do the hard, necessary work for things he believes in. He is a genuine authentic leader – brilliant, candid, and with an overflowing compassion for the community.

It is impressive that Mr. Smith managed to exemplify these qualities while facing the charges that led to his conviction and this letter. Throughout a time of genuine personal difficulty, Mr. Smith showed grace, and an ability to focus on others above himself, while still taking accountability for his own actions.

It is our sincere hope that you will see that the events that led to Mr. Smith's arrest were an aberration from a life filled with service to others and that his current conduct will guide you to making a fair and just determination of his sentence.

Lastly, it is not an exaggeration to say that Mr. Smith has a very supportive community behind him, filled with individuals who have varied experience with the criminal legal system and will continue to support the positive work he is doing to work with others. By allowing him to



Abolitionist Law Center  
P.O. Box 8654  
Pittsburgh, PA 15221  
[abolitionistlawcenter.org](http://abolitionistlawcenter.org)

continue his current advocacy and community efforts, you will not only be sparing him from the effects of incarceration, you will also contribute to the positive work he has done and continues to do in his community. We write in support of a sentence of non-incarceration for Mr. Smith, a sentence that reflects the positive impact that he is on his community.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Nia Holston, Esq.  
/s/ Rupalee Rashatwar, Esq.  
/s/ Bret Grote, Esq.  
/s/ Quinn Cozzens, Esq.  
Abolitionist Law Center  
631 N. 12<sup>th</sup> Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19123  
[nia@alcenter.org](mailto:nia@alcenter.org)  
[rupalee@alcenter.org](mailto:rupalee@alcenter.org)  
[bretgrote@alcenter.org](mailto:bretgrote@alcenter.org)  
[quinncozzens@alcenter.org](mailto:quinncozzens@alcenter.org)





YouthBuild Philadelphia Charter School  
1231 N. Broad St., 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
Philadelphia PA 19122  
(P) 215-627-8671  
(F) 215-763-5774

To whom it may concern:

I'm writing this letter on behalf of Anthony Smith, who I worked with at YouthBuild for one year. Ant's generous spirit, his thoughtfulness, and his unwavering commitment to student success has made him a beloved and integral member of our school community.

As a new teacher last year, I relied on returning staff to answer my questions and to model strategies for connecting with and teaching students. I loved to watch the way Ant instructed students in his classroom, coached students in the hallways, and cheered them on in community spaces. He pushed his Social Studies class to produce high-quality work through creative assignments that allowed them to pursue their own interests while learning research, writing, and advocacy skills. He shared his knowledge of film in a Film & Media class where students had the opportunity to write and film a short script. Outside of the classroom, Ant was always the first person to respond to a student in distress, using his steady demeanor to help them regulate. He didn't shy away from being firm with students, but approached every interaction with a calm and empathetic attitude, seeking to understand the situation. He taught every student in the school and got to know each one of them. His genuine dedication to his work is something that has guided me during my time at YouthBuild and that I still aspire to.

Ant's energy around the building was palpable—it's one of the ways in which his absence is most notable now. He has a unique ability to engage an audience and can make a group of tired, reluctant students feel enthusiastic and inspired. He was a true leader in the school community, always taking initiative but never ignoring the voices around him.

Ant is a deep thinker and a kind person who stands up for what he believes in and approaches everyone he meets with empathy and respect; I support him without hesitation.

Sincerely,  
Emma Sunog  
Language Arts Teacher

Dear, Judge

My name is Brittany Hammond and I am a Sales Associate in the state of Pennsylvania. I am writing on behalf of my former history teacher and mentor Anthony Smith. I had the pleasure of meeting Anthony in 2019 at Youthbuild Charter High School. During my interactions with him I was able to build a close relationship with him and learn about his life. Throughout my time at YouthBuild I've come to know Anthony to be an amazing educator, friend and overall an inspiring person. His caring nature and ability to offer guidance has been instrumental in my growth both personally and professionally. I was able to spend time with Anthony at various community service engagement events. His genuine concern for those around him and his commitment to lead by example makes him an outstanding community member.

Without Anthony's constant guidance during my time at Youthbuild my experience would've been dramatically different. While attending, I had various familial situations arise which made it difficult to maintain my grit; it was Anthony's constant and unwavering support that kept me motivated. The same can be said by my former classmates. His support extended well beyond graduation as he continues to be someone we can rely on.

Upon learning that Anthony is not able to teach this year my first thought went to the students of YouthBuild. I have no doubt that for those students, and staff alike, who already knew him his absence is being felt. Anthony is an integral and irreplaceable member of that community. Beyond that, my thoughts go to those students who won't have the chance to experience his positive impact in the classroom and on their lives. There is no way to measure how detrimental his absence will be.

While making your decision I hope that you take into consideration not only the aforementioned impact that Anthony has had on my life but also the impact on those students who could come after me.

Respectfully,  
Brittany Hammond

**Letter of Support for Anthony Smith**

It is hard to sum up what Anthony Smith has meant to Youthbuild and myself in just a few short paragraphs but I will do my best. I have had the honor to work alongside Anthony for the past two years at Youthbuild Charter School. During that time I got to see just how much of an impact he has made in every corner of this school. Anthony is so embedded into the foundation at Youthbuild that you would think that he built the school himself. He was always there when a student was having a problem to provide a listening ear. Whenever we had a march or a school gathering he was always there hyping up the students and leading them into a positive battle cry with our Youthbuild motto. He did everything that a good teacher should do, and even went above and beyond that.

For me personally it's hard to picture my professional life without Anthony around. He has helped me navigate through my first year at this school and made me become a better teacher. He was always patient and kind and jumped in whenever I needed it. I formed a close bond with him almost immediately. I don't think it was a person at this school that didn't feel some sort of connection to him because of the nature of his personality. I owe a lot to Anthony especially towards the beginning when I was walking around this school with a notebook and a pen trying to learn the ropes of working here. He made things easy for me, and I knew I could come to him with repeated questions, questions and conversation that often stretched way beyond school hours.

Our school is a school for second chances. It is echoed in the hallways, the classrooms, and everywhere in between. Anthony has spoken to every student here about second chances and making the most of a second chance. He has mentored countless students over the years that have been a part of this school family. Even students that have long since graduated has come back looking to speak with him due to the impact that he has made here. An impact is the best word that I choose to describe Anthony Smith. He made a positive and lasting impact on us, the students, and the school culture. We need more people like Anthony in this world, someone who's not afraid to stand up for what's right and educate, mold, and challenge young minds. Since Anthony has spent the past seven years teaching about second changes I really hope that he is now able to get one himself.

Thank You,

Harry Salmond

YouthBuild Vocational Coordinator

Aaron Mittleman  
106 Mill Rd  
Havertown, PA 19083

The Honorable Juan R. Sánchez  
601 Market Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19106

November 10, 2023

Dear Judge Sánchez,

I am Aaron Mittleman, currently working as a data analyst at YouthBuild Philadelphia Charter School. It was here at YouthBuild where I had the pleasure of knowing Ant Smith professionally for a little over two years. In our smaller school of around sixty staff, I came to know him about as well as I did any other coworker.

I am aware that Ant has been found guilty of Civil Disorder. I would like to offer a picture of who Ant is, and show that he is far more than this offense. As a coworker, he was friendly to me from my first week and supported my growth as a staff member. The greatest strength I saw from him was his ability to connect to everyone in the YouthBuild community. I repeatedly saw him tell young people their self-worth, likely something that they were hearing for the first time. When students did well, he was the first to cheer them on and celebrate. At the start of each school year, Ant would openly commit to making his students better citizens. At community service projects, Ant encouraged all of us to continue the work somewhere meaningful to us. He once told me that community service and organizing was his own means of self-care. In a workplace where all staff share a mission of social justice and supporting young people, I've seen few do so as personally and authentically as him.

Thank you for taking the time to read this before making your decision. Ant remains committed to serving our community even though he is no longer at YouthBuild. He can continue to impact the lives of others if he does not face incarceration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Aaron Mittleman', written in dark ink.

Aaron Mittleman

**Subject: Character Reference**

Your Honor:

I had the pleasure of working with Anthony Smith at YouthBuild for several months. You would think knowing someone for such a short amount of time would make it difficult to write a character letter, but that is not the case at all.

Anthony, or Mr. Ant, genuinely and consistently greeted every single person he saw every single day. Whether you were a student or staff member at YouthBuild, you could always count on Mr. Ant for a warm greeting and conversation. Mr. Ant was often the facilitator of our weekly community meetings in which students and staff would come together and check in. He spoke in a way that was encouraging, validating, and grounding all at once and left students and staff alike feeling seen and inspired.

His passion for young people and his work as an educator is vibrant and contagious. Being an educator is so much more than a job for him. It's a calling. I can honestly say that after 13 years in education, I have never met someone who has been able to be so real, empathetic, and encouraging with young people.

If you wish to know more, or have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Whistler

812-212-3717

Whistler.jennifer@gmail.com



Richard Chalme  
4207 Vesper Circle  
Palmyra, NJ 08065  
805-341-9913

11/05/2023

Re: Anthony Smith

To the honorable Judge Sanchez

I have had the pleasure and the honor of being a colleague and acquaintance of Anthony Smith for the last seven years. In those seven years, Anthony has had the opportunity to teach, mentor, and support the development of approximately 1,400 students and hundreds of coworkers. Each student and coworker has left that experience as a better person, a more developed person, and a more civically and community-engaged citizen. A sign of a great educator is when alumni come back to visit you or seek you after they are no longer a student of yours. I've seen hundreds of alumni seek out Anthony Smith after they were no longer his student to check in with him, connect with him, and get further advice from him. Anthony has done so much for the next generation of Philadelphia's leaders and he has helped create many brighter futures for so many citizens of Philadelphia.

Anthony Smith has so much to offer to the city of Philadelphia and society as a whole. In a city that needs healing, Anthony cares about his community and provides community service to it to make the community a stronger, healthier, and more vibrant place. Unfortunately, there aren't enough people who are willing to do this but Anthony is one of those. Anthony can help bring communities together and individuals cope with traumas.

It is my sincere hope that you take all of my words into consideration as the Anthony Smith that I know is an individual who cares for people, loves his community, and makes the world a better place.

Sincerely,  
Richard Chalme  
Richard Chalme



**West Philadelphia  
Participatory Defense Hub**

267-766-0097  
[westphillydefensehub@gmail.com](mailto:westphillydefensehub@gmail.com)  
4901 Kingsessing Ave.  
Philadelphia, PA 19143

September 10, 2023

Dear Your Honor,

I am writing to you on behalf of Anthony Smith and the invaluable role he plays in our community. I have known Ant since 2020 through my work as a public high school teacher and as a member of the Racial Justice Organizing Committee and the West Philadelphia Participatory Defense Hub. In all of these aspects of my work, Ant is a role model to me and a genuine source of inspiration for what it means to build community – specifically our youth – in positive ways.

Ant is an extremely dedicated, compassionate, and intentional educator. In the midst of massive teacher resignations following the pandemic, Ant remained committed to staying in the classroom. He chose to teach at YouthBuild, a program that gives new opportunities to over-age, under-credited students and has a strong commitment to restorative justice. Although Ant is not one to brag, I have heard through several mutual colleagues about how thoughtfully he works to develop the identities, intellect, and civic awareness of every student he teaches. He goes above and beyond for his students, often engaging in youth development during his personal time outside of work. He also sets an important example as a man who embraces and affirms all identities. For instance, he took one of his students to the Philly Trans March to give a speech and he consistently uplifts women's voices.

Ant frequently talks about how he uses his classroom and other spaces with youth to combat violence in our community. He both models restorative approaches to conflict resolution in his class, and encourages young people to think about strategies for community safety that center healing and justice, rather than retaliation and harm. The manner in which he actively disrupts cycles of violence among youth is especially critical in the face of gun violence in our city. He is also engaged in mutual aid efforts such as Food Not Bombs Solidarity.

It is already a great loss to anyone who cares about our community that Ant will not be able to work in a school setting for the next decade. It would be even more devastating to lose his presence entirely. With time served on house arrest and the countless ways he has promoted peace, positivity, community uplift, and youth development, I believe that Ant has done more than enough to show that he deserves the chance to continue contributing to our society. If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact me at [gann.hannah@gmail.com](mailto:gann.hannah@gmail.com). Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Hannah Gann



November 17, 2023

To Whom It May Concern:

Lift Every Voice Philly is a nonprofit organization that supports parents to engage and advocate for stronger public schools.

Over the past year, our public school parent members have been working collaboratively with school district officials to fill critical vacancies in nursing at school sites. Their efforts have resulted in an 83% reduction in nurse vacancies. We are excited for the positive impact that this new success will have on student performance and attendance.

To bolster our efforts, Lift Every Voice Philadelphia is expanding our team.

On Friday, November 17th we conducted a third round interview with Anthony Smith, and made the decision to move him forward to our final round interviews. Over three interviews, we have found him to be a strong prospective candidate for a full-time, staff position. Anthony's extensive work with young people who are trying to get back on track, as well as his experience developing and facilitating engaging curricula make him a strong candidate for the position.

Anthony is motivated by the opportunity to support parent engagement and student success in the school district that he is a product of. Although this is not an official job offer, it is an acknowledgment of our excitement about his candidacy, and desire to move him forward in the interview process. We were impressed with his empathy towards his own community, his commitment to advocate for a better world, and his ability to be both self-reflective and confident regarding his past experiences.

**Shanée Garner**  
Executive Director  
Lift Every Voice Philly  
(267) 304-5929

**Jordan Konell, Esq.**  
Governance Chair  
Lift Every Voice Philly  
(215) 498-7102



Dear Judge,

My former instructor, Anthony Smith has been a great support to not only me but the student body at my program. From my personal account, Mr. Smith has been very impactful to my education and being a positive role model.

My name is Majilani Collins. I was raised in the city of brotherly love, into a lower class family, so opportunities were narrow. Various adversities hindered my progress academically. I attended a local public school where I recall having to share textbooks with my peers throughout the semester because the funding was limited.

As a young adult I decided to further my education despite my income. A family member sent me an application to YouthBuild and the mission statement resonated with me. The nonprofit program set out to give students the skills and opportunities to prompt them into a career. Students had the option to learn a trade while taking accelerated classes to earn the remaining credits for graduation.

During Mental Toughness which can be described as a week of orientation with the building and staff, I met Mr. Smith, who smiled and encouraged me on to the testing portion of the week. He was so involved with the process. I remember his outgoing speeches filled with empathy but still making everyone audibly laugh with his jokes. Each day empowered me as a youth and it didn't feel like a typical secondary school.

Mr. Smith would help the school organize community service events. One event being the local garden that we cleaned, painted and planted vegetables. It was a memory I will never forget. My favorite class to take was my civics and government because Mr. Smith taught in a very intriguing way. I learned a plethora of sociopolitical topics and there would always be class discourse about the lesson. In his class there weren't any wrong opinions and I felt comfortable asking questions about historical events.

A moment in particular I reflect on is when I learned about the justice system and a citizen's constitutional right to exercise their free speech. I showed Mr. Smith my draft and he helped me better my writing to advocate for my stance on this subject. He inspired me with his experience with advocating for families that dealt with injustice and also to make structural changes at the supreme court. Mr. Smith would let me study in his classroom and we'd talk often. He told me of his degree in communications and his affinity towards meaningful interactions. I couldn't begin to be as outgoing or do public speaking as swiftly as he could. These conversations helped me understand what I really wanted to become.

I graduated and once again as I walked across the stage on graduation there he was cheering me along. I am a part of the class of 2023 and I earned 3 certifications along with a diploma. I am currently an undergraduate in college with a major in healthcare studies. His support has shaped me into who I am today.

Sincerely,  
Majilani Collins



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(F) 215-763-5774  
[www.YouthBuildPhilly.org](http://www.YouthBuildPhilly.org)

Le'Yondo Dunn  
1231 N. Broad St, Philadelphia PA, 19122  
November 17, 2023

Honorable Juan R. Sánchez  
Chief Judge of U.S. District Court  
601 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA 19106  
Re: Anthony Smith

Dear Judge Sánchez:

My name is Le'Yondo Dunn, and I am the Chief Executive Officer of YouthBuild Philadelphia Charter School. I am writing to you on behalf of Mr. Anthony Smith, to request that he be able to continue his valuable community efforts, and avoid potential incarceration in his upcoming hearing, scheduled for November 28th, 2023.

I want to first bring to your attention to Mr. Smith's remarkable character and the invaluable positive impact that he has had on our organization, and the Philadelphia community at large. Through his unwavering commitment, he has consistently exhibited qualities of compassion, integrity, and dedication that have left an indelible mark on those around him. His selfless contributions have uplifted the community, fostering a sense of unity and well-being. Mr. Smith's tireless efforts in various community initiatives, from mentoring youth to participating in local projects, exemplify a commitment to social betterment. It is my sincere belief that his continued involvement in these transformative endeavors not only enriches the lives of others but also contributes significantly to the fabric of our community.

Furthermore, Mr. Smith has become an influential mentor and role model, tirelessly investing time and energy to guide and inspire young individuals in our community. His commitment to fostering personal growth and providing a supportive environment for these young lives has been instrumental in steering them away from negative influences. Mr. Smith's initiatives, ranging from educational support to mentorship, have not only equipped the youth with valuable skills, but have also instilled a sense of hope and aspiration among them as well. Recognizing the transformative influence he has had on his community, I sincerely urge your consideration in allowing him to continue to impact and inspire those around him for the better, without facing incarceration.

Respectfully,  
Le'Yondo Dunn  
Chief Executive Officer

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Le'Yondo Dunn". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.



YouthBuild Philadelphia Charter School  
1231 N. Broad St., 5<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Philadelphia PA 19122  
(P) 215-627-8671  
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To the commonwealth:

Anthony Smith is one of those people who will make a positive impact in the community wherever he goes. When he is with friends, he contributes attentiveness, emotional support, and humor. When he is teaching, he contributes high engagement and intention with students and staff. When he is in the Philadelphia community, he contributes thoughtfulness and passion. And he contributes much more that I have not witnessed.

Due to Anthony's impact on the community, I am asking that his sentencing not include incarceration. Anthony has strong ties to individuals and institutions in Philadelphia. He was born and raised here and has accumulated long-lasting relationships throughout his life. If Anthony were to be incarcerated, you would be removing a valued member from the Philadelphia community.

Respectfully,

Kali Thomas

Jordan Gore  
8/29/23

To the Commonwealth,

I am writing to express my gratitude and admiration for the impact Mr. Ant had on my life as a student. His dedication, passion, and unwavering support made a lasting impression and truly shaped my educational journey. Apart from being an extraordinary educator, He is also an exceptional mentor. His door is always open, welcoming students with good energy and a listening ear without judgment. You can tell Mr. Ant truly cares about our well-being, both academically and personally.

During my time as a student at YouthBuild, I had the privilege of being taught and mentored by Mr. Ant. From the very first day I stepped into his classroom, I was met with an unwavering dedication to his students' success. What sets Mr. Ant apart is his ability to engage with students using his personality. He consistently demonstrates leadership, patience, kindness, and understanding, which establishes trust in the community. His genuine interest in our lives, aspirations, and struggles has provided a sense of comfort and encouragement that has empowered me and many other students to overcome challenges and strive for excellence.

Dear Judge Sanchez,

I am writing this letter to attest to Anthony Smith's character and positive impact on the YouthBuild and Philadelphia community and to implore you to consider a sentence that does not include incarceration.

As a 14 year Philadelphia teacher and school leader I have worked with hundreds, if not thousands, of teachers in our city over the years. While many of them did great work for students, I am not exaggerating when I say that Mr. Ant is one of the most dynamic, transformational, and inspirational teachers I have ever met. He loves his students unconditionally, goes above and beyond to support them in every way imaginable, and truly has a gift for inspiring and motivating students with love, belief, and support. It breaks my heart that this incident resulted in him not being able to continue teaching at YouthBuild this year and our school misses his presence dearly.

Please consider a sentence that does not include incarceration. I am confident that if you do, Mr. Ant will have an enormous positive impact on our city and community in a thousand ways.

Best,  
Taylor Uyehara  
[uyehara@gmail.com](mailto:uyehara@gmail.com)  
707-484-018

Tashia Ervin

Philadelphia, PA 19121

(267) 312-9208

10/28/2023

The Honorable Judge Sanchez

James A. Byrne Courthouse,

601 Market Street, Philadelphia PA

ATTN: Anthony Smith

Dear Judge Sanchez,

My name is Tasha Ervin, I am a store manager at Rainbow Retail, and I am a resident in the state of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. I am writing on behalf of my son, Anthony Smith. I am writing this letter because I know who my son is and can speak to his character. I have known him his entire life. When I had Anthony, he was an only child navigating his surroundings. Seeing Anthony grow up and be able to show endless empathy and be a care giver to me, his younger sister, brothers, and those that are lucky to be around him has been something I am so proud to be a part of. In this world, I am not able to depend on many but I know Anthony is someone who has always been there not only for me but all the people he holds close. He not only helps me emotionally but has always been someone I can depend on financially. He has such a love for the people around him that is different than anyone I know.

I would be broken without Anthony in my life. I have seen him offer solace to people who could never repay him and I know they would be broken without him by their side too. His intellect has provided knowledge to his family, students, and peers. His ability to provide empathy to others is something pure. His love is something that has protected me when I needed it the most. I don't know anyone who offers as much support and care as Anthony has provided me and those around him.

It is difficult for me to write this letter and hope this letter has provided how foundational Anthony's presence is to me. it is my hope that I have presented this letter to show you why he is needed here the most.

Thank you Judge for your time and consideration for reading my letter. I hope you will conder my request.

Respectfully,

Tashia Evans